UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

# Women migrant workers in the global economy: The role of critical feminist pedagogy for Filipino domestic workers

by

Susan Mary Brigham ©

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

in

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Susan Mary Brigham
8653 108A Street,
Edmonton, AB
T6E 4M7

September 30, 2002

UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research for acceptance, a thesis entitled *Women migrant workers in the global economy: The role of critical feminist pedagogy for Filipino domestic workers*, submitted by Susan Mary Brigham in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in International/Intercultural Education in Educational Policy Studies.

Dr. Toh Swee-Hin, Co-Supervisor

Dr. Virginia F. Cawagas, Co-Supervisor

Dr. Marilyn Assheton-Smith

Dr. Debra Shogan

Dr. Kazim Bacchus

Sandra Ubelacker
Dr. Sandra Ubelacker

Dr. Vincent Shieh, External Examiner

Date: Sept 13/02

**Dedicated to:**

Overseas migrant workers everywhere.

The memory of my grandparents, Lily (Pat) Brigham and John E. Brigham of Cambridge, England, both of whom passed away during my PHD programme. My grandparents were teachers and their enthusiastic pursuit of lifelong learning has always inspired me throughout my life.

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# ABSTRACT

The outflow of Filipino women as migrant domestic workers to countries all over the globe is one of the largest female migration streams in the world today. The interest in this phenomenon has been increasing over the past twenty years and many studies have explored social, political, economic and gender issues. However, there has been little attention paid to the ways in which education in all its modes (formal, nonformal and informal) shapes and influences the overseas domestic workers' (ODWs) lives, before, during and after their experiences overseas.

This study addresses this gap, exploring the role education plays in the lives of overseas domestic workers (ODWs) in three stages (before, during and after their ODW experiences) in Asian and Middle Eastern countries. It also examines how the needs, concerns and rights of ODWs can be better met through a change in relationships between the educational and the economic, social, political and cultural sectors of the Philippine and the host countries' societies.

This research is situated within a social and historical framework, which takes into consideration, the role of labour in development, the feminisation of migrant labour in the global economy, and the role of education in the production and reproduction of labour.

Methodologically I used qualitative research methods, which focus on the participants' viewpoints to understand interaction, process and social change. I employed the long interview and the narrative form of inquiry, which is the study of how human beings experience the world. Four groups of people in the Philippines were interviewed for this study: Filipino migrant domestic workers, NGO workers, government officials, and a legislator in Congress.

Theoretically I draw on the framework of critical feminist pedagogy. Insights from post-modern and post-colonial 'Third World' feminists also guide this study.

After examining the ODWs' realities, it is evident that education has been very influential in the women's life experiences as well as the inequitable cultural, economic, and political structures both in the sending and receiving countries. The study recommends educational and developmental strategies that take on the challenge of developing a critical analysis of oppressive social systems in order to transform them.

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## List of acronyms

ARMM = Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao

BFE = Bureau of Formal Education

CARP = Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program

CBCP = Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines

CDA = Co-operative Development Authority

CIDA = Canadian International Development Agency

CPP = Communist Party of the Philippines

CFP = Critical Feminist Pedagogy

DECS = Department of Education, Culture and Sports

DFA = Department of Foreign affairs

EDSA = Epifanio de los Santos Avenue (the "EDSA revolution" was named after this Manila boulevard, which was the staging ground for popular rallies, strikes and demonstrations.)

EFA = Education for All (United Nation's programme)

EPZ = Export Processing Zone

EU = European Union

FTAA = Free Trade Agreement of the Americas

GAD = Gender and Development

GDP = Gross Domestic Product

GMA = Gloria Macapagal Arroyo (the President of the Philippines)

GNP = Gross National Product

GO = Government Organisation

IFI = International Financial Institution

ILO = International Labour Organisation

IMF = International Monetary Fund

MILF = Moro Islamic Liberation Front

MNLF = Moro National Liberation Front

MTPDP = Medium-Term Development Plan

NAFTA = North American Free Trade Agreement

NCR = National Capital Region
NIC = Newly Industrialised Country
NIDL = new international division of labour
NGO = non-governmental organisation
NPA = National People's Army
NSB = National Seaman Board
OCW = overseas contract worker
ODW = overseas domestic worker
OECD = Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OEDB = Overseas Employment Development Board
OFW = overseas foreign worker
OPEC = The Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries
OSY = Out-of-School youth
OWWA = Overseas Workers' Welfare Administration
PCPII = the Second Plenary Council of the Philippines
PDOS = Pre-departure Overseas Seminar
PO = People's Organisation
POEA = Philippine Overseas Employment Administration
SAP = Structural Adjustment Program
SCUs = State Colleges and Universities
SPCPD = Southern Philippines Council for Peace and Development
TNC = transnational corporation
TTS = Teachers Training Seminars
UAE = United Arab Emirates
WTO = World Trade Organisation
WID = Women in Development
WAD = Women and Development

# Chapter One: Background to the study

## Introduction

The plight of Filipino overseas domestic workers (ODWs) gained international attention with the cases of two Filipino women, Flor Contemplacion and Sarah Balabagan. Ms Contemplacion, a 42 year old mother of four went to work in Singapore in 1991. In 1994 she was convicted of a double murder of another Filipino ODW, Delia Maga and the four year old son of Maga's Singaporean employer. Despite evidence that Contemplacion may have been framed by Maga's male employer – himself the prime suspect, she was executed on March 17, 1995. Following her execution political protest actions ensued by millions of enraged Filipinos (Saffire, 1995) against the Singaporean government along with "a louder clamour... against some Filipino government officials mandated by law to give overseas Filipinos adequate protection while abroad" (Gancayco, 1995). Diplomatic ties between the two countries were temporarily severed.

In 1993 Sarah Balabagan at the age of 15 was illegally recruited to work as an ODW in the United Arab Emirates (UAE). The official documents which the illegal agency provided for Balabagan indicated that she was 30 years old (MFMW, 1995). Two months after arriving at the home of her UAE employer, Balabagan was sexually assaulted by her male employer. In self-defence Balabagan killed him. After her first trial she was tried as an adult and sentenced to death which "outraged [the] world" (Beltran, 1996). The response was political protests and national and international organised campaigns for "Justice and freedom" and "the total acquittal, unconditional release and repatriation of Sarah Balabagan" (MWMW, 1995) and a call from the Philippine government for a lighter sentence. At Balabagan's third trial her sentence was changed from death to a fine of $41,000, 100 lashes and nine months imprisonment. She returned home in August 1996 (Beltran, 1996).

These two celebrated cases (although there are hundreds more cases, which have not received as much media attention and national and international response) highlight some of the difficulties and risks ODWs face. Over the past thirty years there has been a growth of Nongovernment organisations (NGOs) and other civil society movements working with

ODWs to challenge the systemic and individual violations of human rights of ODWs. These organisations have been very active in placing migrant workers' concerns into public discourse and actively pressuring governments to take migrant workers' issues more seriously to ensure these workers are protected whilst abroad. Government organisations, NGOs and academics have documented violations of basic human rights of the migrant worker. These documented violations include: the migrant workers' passports being held by employers (which could lead to arrest and detention of the migrant by the state, and a restricted freedom of movement); unlawful deductions from salaries; delayed, underpaid or non-payment of wages; contract substitution; non-provision of housing and medical care benefits; violence in the form of physical, psychological, sexual and verbal abuse; inadequate provision of living conditions; insufficient or no nourishment; breach of contract; unregulated working hours; sexual assault; rape; insufficient health care; isolation; blocking external communication (i.e. the migrant worker is not permitted to send or receive mail or telephone calls); mental stress or breakdown (Abera-Mangahas, 1996; Brigham, 1995; Devins, 1992; Lim & Oishi, 1996; Osteria, 1994; Silvera, 1986; Stalker, 1994) and even death by torture, or starvation, murder, etc.

My personal awareness of the difficulties Filipino ODWs face developed when I lived and worked in Kuwait. Rarely a day went by that I was not conscious of the presence of ODWs and their lowly status in society. At the end of each school day many ODWs came with the children's parents to carry the children's book bags and shepherd the children to the waiting air-conditioned cars. Everyday, I saw these women riding on buses, working in the homes I visited, washing cars outside huge houses in the neighbourhood, and heard them being talked about by colleagues who employed them. Frequently I would read a news item or a letter to the editor in the English language newspaper, which alerted me to the restricted and often unsafe working conditions and the lack of protection these women were provided while working in employers' homes. In attempting to understand the ODWs' placement in the societal hierarchy as well as the violations of human rights these women faced in this work, I was forced to struggle with issues of race, class, gender and ethnicity. But without access to resources (English language books on the subjects, current research, academic journals, knowledgeable people, etc.) and an atmosphere where I could discuss and debate with other people interested in similar topics I felt frustrated. However I was also determined to learn more.

Two years after returning to Canada I enrolled in a Master's program in the Faculty of Education at the University of Alberta. The interest I had developed in the ODW phenomenon while living in Kuwait and my exposure to new ideas and theories from graduate course work led me to conduct a qualitative study on Filipino live-in caregivers in Edmonton, focussing on the role of education in their lives. My master's programme and thesis research helped me to understand the issues I was grappling with while overseas, but also raised further questions and increased my desire to delve deeper into the ODW experiences.

I have found that although there is an increasing body of literature on the ODW phenomenon, which focuses on social, economic, political, and gender contexts and issues, there is little research to date that prominently explores the role of education in ODWs' experiences. This leaves a gap in an important aspect of ODW experiences, particularly as the ODWs' educational background significantly shape, guide and influence their lives at all three stages – the pre-departure stage, the ODW stage and the post-ODW stage.

My grounding in critical analysis of education as an institution and as a lived experience and my deep interest and concern about the situation of ODWs around the world led to the focussing of this study. The study examines the role of education (formal, nonformal and informal education) in the lives of Filipino ODWs who have worked in Asian and Middle Eastern countries.

Before detailing the research problem it is pertinent to provide a conceptual framework underlying the study.

## Conceptual Framework

### (a) Women of the South in the Global Economy

In the decades following World War II, governments of North and South nations in collaboration with international agencies like the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) have sought to foster "development" to overcome the problems of world hunger and poverty. These development programs were based on the modernisation paradigm, which was grounded on the idea that if all "Third World" (now referred to as the South) countries simply followed the developmental stages of the Western or "First World" richer countries (now referred to as the North) they would "take off" to prosperity.

Through the free market mechanisms of trade and investment (notably controlled by transnational corporations [TNCs]), South nations would begin to industrialise, export products and be integrated into the global economy. To facilitate this modernisation, aid would be provided by bilateral donors (e.g. USAID, CIDA) and loans by international agencies especially the World Bank and IMF. However, after decades of "development" the continuing evidence of poverty in most South societies clearly dispute the validity of this modernisation paradigm (Allahar, 1995; Larraine, 1989; Pacione, 1988). The "trickle down" that was suppose to have occurred did not. Both men and women (and their children) especially those in rural areas continue to suffer greatly under the burden of poverty. As well, the migration of rural poor to urban areas in search of work and subsistence has led to the growth of the urban poor living in overcrowded slums or shanty towns. Clearly modernisation has not resulted in all people meeting their basic needs but rather inequalities between rich and poor peoples in the South and between North and South countries have increased. As critical analysts have argued, an alternative paradigm for development needs to be participatory, equitable, sustainable, and appropriate, both in technological and values dimensions (Clark, 1991; Bello & Rosenfield, 1993; Toh & Floresca-Cawagas, 1990). In recent years a rigorous global movement has emerged to challenge the corporate and North controlled system of globalisation forces that are manifested in such international bodies and regulators as the World Trade Organisation (WTO), European Union (EU), NAFTA (North American Free Trade Agreement), and FTAA (Free Trade Agreement of the Americas) (CSIS, 2000; Klein, 2000) (cf. Anti-globalization websites on the internet).

In reconsidering the dominant paradigm of modernisation a major strand of theory and practice has been focussed on the role of women. The needs and multiple roles of women in development were ignored, which resulted in even further hardships for women (Young, 1993). Again the assumption was that there would be a trickle down of benefits from men to women within the household (Moser, 1993). It did not occur. New technologies were for the sole use of men, which disrupted women's means of support, added further to women's workloads, and created greater dependency of women on men (Momsen, 1991). Although women's roles, needs and voices have increasingly became recognised over time through an evolution of a succession of developmental paradigms (from the WID [Women in Development], the WAD [Women and Development], and the GAD [Gender and Development]), there is still much to be done.

Globalisation and the new international division of labour have further exacerbated the inequalities between men and women, between the classes, between ethnic groups, and between developing and developed countries. This is best illustrated by the feminisation of the international migration of labour as women, especially women from poorer countries, are pushed out of their home countries by poverty and unemployment among other reasons and pulled to wealthier countries where their "feminised" labour is in demand. The Philippines is a case in point where women make up nearly 60 percent of the landbased[1] migrant workers (DOLE, 2001). They are concentrated in the service sector – the majority of whom are employed as domestic workers. These workers often have education, experience and a bounty of skills, talents and aptitude for so many other occupations, but those credentials and skills are not required or in demand. The demand is for cheap labour in unskilled jobs, which are considered "naturally" women's work - work that is undervalued, demeaning and dangerous. The result is a *deskilling* of these workers.

---

[1] The Philippine government classifies migrants as either sea-based (sailors, sea-farers) or landbased.

### (b) The Philippine context: The land and its people.

The Republic of the Philippines is roughly located south of Taiwan, west of Vietnam and Malaysia, north of Indonesia. It is an island archipelago of 7107 islands and islets, surrounded by the Pacific Ocean, the Philippine Sea, the South China Sea, the Sulu Sea and the Celebes Sea. The 11 largest islands account for more than 90 percent of the country's total land area. Luzon in the northern part of the country and Mindanao in the south are the two largest islands. These two islands make up more than 70 percent of the land area and accommodate more than 70 percent of the population. In fact, more than half of the population resides in Luzon alone (Philippines census, 2001).

With a tropical climate, the country frequently experiences severe flooding, typhoons (in the northern and eastern sections of the country), earthquakes, droughts (a severe one occurred in 1997-98), and occasional volcanic eruptions (most notable was Mt. Pinatubo in 1991). El Niño weather shocks in 1997 combined with the regional financial crisis was the cause of economic decline in the country (World Bank, 2001) and La Niña is continuing to create difficulties. These natural disasters have caused loss of life, disruption in work, destruction of crops and homes and resulted in a strain on the people and the government (DeGuzman and Reforma, 1988).

The population as of May 2000 is 76.5 million (Philippine census, 2001) consisting of peoples of Malay, Chinese and Spanish decent, a Christian majority, Muslim minorities and a number of *mestizos* (Filipino-Spanish and Filipino-American) (Lonely Planet, 2001). The annual population growth rate is 2.3 percent (in the 1990s it was between 2.2 and 2.3 percent) (World Bank, 2001; Philippines census, 2001). At this rate the population will double by the year 2030. There are approximately 550,000 more males than females in the total population and the majority of people (approximately 34 million) are under the age of 19 years (Philippines census, 2001).

The Philippines, like many countries, is ethno-culturally and linguistically diverse. There are more than a hundred indigenous languages in the Philippines, all of which belong to the Austronesian family, and more immediately to the Hesperonesian and Philippine sub-families (Dyen 1965). Approximately 90 per cent of the population speak one of the eight major languages: Tagalog, Cebuano, Ilocano, Illonggo, Bicol, Samar-Leyte, Pangisanan, and Pampangan. Each language has variations and there are many more minor languages. Most Filipinos have a basic understanding of two or more native languages, as well as English. In addition to the division on the basis of language, ethnicity, culture, geography, class and gender divide Filipinos.

### (c) Political history

Among countries in the Asian region the Philippines experienced the longest period of colonisation (under the Spanish). Direct political control by Spain began in 1560 when Philip II of Spain (for whom the country was named) ordered another expedition following the death of Magellan, the Portuguese explorer who came across the "Philippines" islands in 1521. Magellan was killed in a conflict between two native leaders. In the last three decades of the 18th century and into the 19th Century, the Filipino nationalist movement challenged Spanish rule. Filipinos fought on the side of Americans against Spain in the Spanish-American war. And although the armed revolution (1886-98) succeeded and an independent republic was declared on June 12, 1898, the USA promptly made the Philippines an American colony by purchasing the islands for $20 million from Spain (Davis, 1987). The Americans occupied the country for 50 years, until Washington granted the Philippines independence July 4 1946. During the 1941-1945 period Filipinos fought Japanese invasion.

Following World War II the Philippines began to rebuild itself with financial aid from the US[2] resulting in both economic and population growth. However, this growth was under the modernisation paradigm, which benefited the small number of elite.

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[2] In comparison to aid given to other countries such as Germany and Japan, US aid to the Philippines appeared meagre much to the disappointment of the Filipinos. Filipinos felt that the US owed them massively after the war because they were allies and "because they had fulfilled their obligations that cemented the 'special relationship'" (Steinberg, 1982: 59).

In 1965 Ferdinand Marcos was elected president. During Marcos' presidency, land reform was a serious issue– a left over from the American's colonial practice of "permitting the elite to gain power through land acquisition". The elite in effect "controlled the government and was the government" (Steinberg, 1982: 96). Even today there are Filipinos who own large tracts of land on which tens of thousand peasants work as tenant, sharecroppers and employers (Steinberg 1994). And although Marcos took over a country that was in fairly good shape (better than most countries in the region) the economy began to slide after just four years of his rule.

The Marcos era was marked by massive corruption, unequal development and militarisation accompanied with severe human rights violations. Adopting IMF and World Bank models, the Philippines embarked on export-led growth followed by heavy international indebtedness and an open door policy to foreign investors (Oxfam, 1997). As the gaps between rich and poor widened amidst growing political repression, political movements began to organise through the strategy of armed struggle.

These political movements included Muslims who were being squeezed out by a massive resettlement of Christians and suffering from economic backwardness despite the influx of export industries (from which Muslims did not see any monetary gains) and students who faced economic hardships after graduation. Contending that the risk of Muslim seccession, Communist rebellion, and domestic anarchy were a threat to the country, Marcos declared Martial law in 1972, but rural insurgency and anarchy particularly by the National People's Army (NPA) and also the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) and the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) continued (Steinberg, 1994). Although driven underground students continued their resurgence of activism, activists in the Roman Catholic Church openly expressed their opposition to Marcos and the April Six group used violence to challenge Marcos during martial law (Steinberg, 1994). But, Marcos continued as president, ruling as a virtual dictator, until 1986. The assassination of opposition leader Benigno Aquino in 1983 sparked a massive people uprising against the government. An election was called in 1986 and Marcos was declared the winner but he was accused of ballot-rigging and fraud and the opposition parties rallied around Cory Aquino – the widow of Benigno

Aquino. She initiated a program of non-violent civil disobedience, which culminated in a "People Power" revolution when hundreds of thousands of Filipinos people stood against Marcos' army at Epifanio de los Santos Avenue (EDSA). The Marcos family fled to the US and Aquino was declared president (Lonely Planet, 2001).

Although democracy was restored under Aquino, the root economic problems were not adequately addressed nor were the army and the powerful elite completely on side with her. Her government "was at constant war with itself and lacked coherent, unified direction" (Steinberg, 1994:182). During her six years as president Aquino survived seven coup attempts. Her government faced problems of not being able to meet the demand for electricity, as well as increased population growth and poverty. In order for the government to maintain its credit, the IMF required the deficit budget to be cut from 5.2 percent of the GDP to 2.5 percent by the end of 1992 (Steinberg, 1994).

During Aquino's presidency, the US strategic influence on the Philippines was lessened especially after the Clarke Air Base was destroyed by the Mt Pinatubo eruption and the lease of Subic Bay was not ratified (Davis, 1987). Also during her time in office, Aquino continued the war on Mindanao while also trying unsuccessfully to reach a deal with the MNLF (Symonds, 2000). The proposal for autonomy for the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) was for only four provinces compared to 13 that were offered in the Tripoli Agreement signed in 1976[3].

Aquino's successor in 1992 was her Defence Minister Fidel Ramos (Marcos' second cousin). His move to office was the first peaceful government transition the country had seen in 20 years. Ramos was determined the Philippines would achieve NIC (Newly Industrialised Country) status by 1998. His *Philippines 2000* program - a slogan which meant liberalisation, deregulation, and the introduction of incentives for foreign investment as the principal tools for reform yielded some success. GNP rose by 7 percent in the first half of 1996, inflation declined to single figures, there was a 30 percent increase in export growth, and debt-servicing fell from 40 percent during the 1980s to 13 percent by 1996 (Oxfam, 1997). However, to the poor who remained marginalised and dispossessed *Philippines 2000* was simply government rhetoric: Thirty five percent were living in absolute poverty (68 million in 1994), 15 million had no access to health care, 20 million had no access to sanitation, 11 million had no access to clean water (Oxfam, 1997). In addition, the environment suffered substantial degradation in the push for industrialisation, under the growth-first paradigm of development. As natural resources are over exploited and fast disappearing so too is the livelihood of millions of people.

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[3] The Tripoli Agreement broke down in 1978. This was when the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) formed as a breakaway group. Many of their members were scholars with a traditional religious background (Symonds, 2000).

The *Philippines 2000* initiative relies heavily on foreign investment which makes the country very "vulnerable to other countries' influences as it seeks desperately needed foreign markets, foreign investments and outright foreign assistance" (Miranda, 1997). So when a massive pull out of foreign investment (investment which is speculative by nature) occurred in 1997-8, the Philippines experienced an economic crisis (as did many countries in the region). Immediately the Thai baht was devalued, as were the currencies of other Asian countries. The Philippine peso fell from 26.5 to the US dollar to 40 (IBON, 1998).

CWR (1998) contends that the crisis affected women the most seriously, particularly those in the labour force. Women workers suffered from lay-offs and retrenchments (which doubled between July 1992 and July 1995), due to streamlining of government as well as state universities and colleges, privatisation of government services, and increased contracting out of labour. In addition to the problems facing women who work outside the home, women around the country are suffering from poverty, unemployment and landlessness. Landgrabbing was a serious problem under the Ramos administration (IBON, 1997c) and the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program (CARP) failed to reverse this as was promised. Several hectares of land were proclaimed exempt from CARP's original promise of 10.3 million hectares that were to be distributed to 3.9 million farmers from 1988 to 1997. By 1996 there were 4.3 million hectares of land distributed - only 54 percent of the original commitment (IBON, 1997b). The High Value Crops Development Act, which was enacted by Ramos, encouraged farmers to move away from producing staple crops (e.g. *palay* [unhusked rice] and corn) to crops for export (e.g. asparagus and cut flowers). This has a profound effect on peasant women who work in the agricultural sector because eight out of ten women are in rice and corn production and women do 54 percent of unmechanised *palay* production (CWR, 1998). Women are displaced, unemployed and poor(er) as a result and the country becomes more dependent on foreign markets and demands.

In an effort to become competitive under globalisation, employers have increasingly resorted to contractualization of the labour force to simplify their operation and lower the cost of production. Companies hire casual workers to work for five months, fire them when the contract expires and hire new workers. Contractualization deprives workers of their right to job security, to organise unions, and to minimum wage. Many companies, which produce garments and electronics for export employ a large number of women. In the Export Processing Zones[4] (EPZs) 87 percent of the employees are women (Seager, 1997). Furthermore, government, which is the largest employer in the country and employer to a majority of women government workers (54 percent)[5] was streamlined (a prescription demanded by the World Bank and the IMF). With the privatisation of public hospitals health workers were laid off and those that remained employed continued to be overworked and underpaid. As social services are privatised and run like businesses, they become more expensive and out of reach for many Filipinos. State Colleges and Universities (SCUs) for example have had to increase their tuition fees to make up for the shortfall of government support. Those that could not survive were phased out, reducing the number of SCUs from 125 to 25.

During Ramos' administration, an agreement to end the 25 year old war in which 125,000 (Philippine government estimate) to 200,000 (MNLF estimate) died was signed between the MNLF and the Philippine government, September 2, 1996. The MNLF was provided autonomy in some areas of the provinces, controlling a new council – the Southern Philippines Council for Peace and Development (SPCPD) that will oversee economic development projects in 14 provinces and in return the rebels dropped their demand for a separate nation (CNN, 1996). However, the splinter group – the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) as well as Abu-Sayyaf[6] were opposed to the peace accord and continue to fight for an independent Islamic country.

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[4] EPZs are industrial centres that are tax free for foreign companies. Labour laws are often suspended in these zones leaving the workers vulnerable to abuses (Seager, 1997).
[5] Although they are a majority of employees women are a minority at the higher levels of government.

When I first arrived in the Philippines to do my data collection in January, 1998, Ramos was installed at the presidential palace but an election had been called and the election campaign was already picking up its pace. By May, 1998 president Joseph Estrada took over the reigns. With his movie star image and his populist slogan "Erap (buddy) for the poor", Estrada was viewed by many as a leader who could narrow the social divide between rich and poor. However, his policies, which were in line with the IMF's demands meant that the country was opened up to foreign investors and the gap only widened between the rich and poor. Poverty increased from 25.1 percent in 1997 to 27.8 percent in 1998 (World Bank, 2001). Within two years his rating in the opinion polls plummeted as his acts of corruption became evident.

During Estrada's administration, the peace deal between the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) and the Philippine government was (and still is) precarious for two reasons: the governor of ARMM (Nur Misuari, who is the leader of the MNLF) had been given little real power and the Philippine government had not honoured their part of the deal – providing funds to ARMM (Symonds, 2000). The economic divide between the Muslim provinces and the rest of the country remained deep, while the Estrada government's policies of total war against the MILF instead of continuing the peace talks has exacerbated militarised conflicts. The continuing problems caused by the Abu Sayyaf group, especially in the kidnappings of foreigners and locals meant a state of continuing political instability in Mindanao.

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[6] Abu Sayyaf was founded in the 1980s by Abdurajak Abubaker Janjalani, an Islamic scholar and a veteran of the Afghan war, who advocates a form of Islam similar to the Islamic Fundamentalists of Afghanistan (Symonds, 2000). Iacovou (2000) asserts that Abu Sayyaf was founded in 1991 and was led by Abdurajak Abubaker Janjalani until his death in 1998. His brother Khaddafy Janjalani is the new leader. The main purpose of the Abu Sayyaf group is to establish an independent Islamic state based on the Islamic law (*Shariah*) in the southern Philippines. The group believes in violent struggle (*Jihad*) to reach their goal

Of the six worst off provinces in the country, five are Muslim provinces (Philippine Human Development Index, 1997). As of 1998, the regions of Mindanao have the highest child mortality rate in the country – with the highest (98 deaths for every 1000 children under age 5) in ARMM (Canuday, 1999). In remote Central Mindanao literacy is 6.1 percent less, life expectancy is 13 years less, and children spend nearly 5 fewer years in school compared to the NCR (Oxfam, 1997). The drought that Mindanao suffered in 1997-8 exacerbated the economic problems in ARMM.

Estrada was impeached by the lower house and brought to trial in late 2000 on charges of corruption and money laundering. More traumas ensued when a majority of the Senate refused to allow the House to examine bank documents. In response to Estrada and his allies' attempts at derailing the trial, the people staged a mass protest in the streets of Manila (referred to as "People Power II") and after four months of turbulence, Estrada was removed from office January 19, 2001 and his vice-president, Gloria Macapagal Arroyo became the new president the next day.

President Arroyo's ("GMA") first few months in office were not altogether peaceful. On May first, 2001 following an attack on Malacañang by the hordes of Estrada supporters numbering 10,000 to 20,000 she declared a state of rebellion, which is provided for in the 1986 constitution. The supporters attacked riot police and broke through police lines with a dump truck. They were met with tear gas, water cannon and warning shots from hundreds of troops and at least two tanks. Two police officers and one protester were killed and seven protesters injured. On this same day, Estrada and his son Jinggoy were transferred by helicopter to a specially built maximum security prison outside of Manila (Guardian Weekly, May 3-9, 2001). The charge of plundering the economy, which Estrada has denied, is punishable by death or a life sentence.

### (d) The economy

The traumatic events leading to the departure of Estrada had a detrimental effect on the market. The pesos hit the lowest intra-day rate of 55.75 pesos to the US dollar on January 17 while interest rates were raised 400 basis points to discourage the flight from peso assets. But once GMA was installed as president the economy began to settle. On January 22 stock prices rose almost 18 percent, the pesos regained strength to 48.5 to the US dollar and borrowing and lending rates were reduced 450 basis points to 10.5 and 12.7 percent respectively (World Bank, 2001).

Based on preliminary figures, the country experienced a modest economic growth in 2000: 3.9 percent growth in gross domestic product (GDP) and 4.2 percent growth in GNP (although in the fourth quarter there was the interruption in foreign investment due to the political troubles). Despite the economic growth the unemployment rate rose to 11.4 percent (up by 1.9 percent from 9.5 percent last year). The labour force participation rate is 65.5 percent. There are 31.7 million people in the labour force (between the ages of 15 and 65 years), of whom 28.1 million are employed. The labour force participation rate for men is 70 percent, while for females it is 42 percent. The number of unemployed people in January, 2001 was 3.6 million up from 2.9 million in January, 2000. This was in large part due to a decrease in the agricultural labour force in 2000. The underemployed rate is 16.9 percent with a 6.3 percent larger number of underemployed people in rural areas compared with the urban areas. The number of underemployed is 4.743 million - one sixth of the total employed people (Economic update, World Bank, 2001; Philippine census, 2001).

Inflation rose in the year 2000 (the average was 4.4 percent) reflecting the increased prices of food and petroleum. It reached 6.9 percent in January, 2001 but fell slightly in February indicating that it may have peaked and is on the way down. (Economic update, World Bank, 2001).

Philippine society has been socially stratified into a minority rich elite, a small middle class, and the poor (DeGuzman and Reforma, 1988; Steinberg, 1994). Poverty increased from 25.1 percent in 1997 to 27.8 percent on 1998, but it fell to 26.3 percent in 1999, with a further decrease in 2000 due to a strong GDP and agricultural growth. In 1999, 37 percent of the population lived below the poverty line (World Bank, 2001).

In relation to the gross domestic product, the structure of the economy is 17.7 percent agricultural based, 30.3 percent industry (of which 21.5 percent is manufacturing) and 52 percent services (World Bank, 2001).

Three fourths of the population depend on agriculture for their livelihood and half of the population depend on it for employment (Soriano, Claudio, and Fansler, 1995). Therefore a 3.5 percent drop in agricultural employment in 2000, was damaging to many rural folk even though there was a 6.3 percent increase in employment in industry and a 3.5 percent increase in employment in services (especially wholesale and retail) (World Bank, 2001). The economy is still oriented to commodity exports and relies on imports of high priced manufactured items, which places the country and its people in a precarious position in the global economy:

> [A] long-term problem has been the nation's overdependence on income from exporting such primary commodities as sugar, timber, copper, gold, and coconuts. Nations that supply such raw materials are often at the mercy of world market prices, over which they have no control. The Philippines' overdependence on raw material exports has diminished somewhat during recent years, but some of the newer economic activities, such as garment manufacturing, create only low-skill and low-wage jobs that have not greatly raised the standard of living for a majority of the people (Compton's Home Library, 1998).

**(e) Migration**

In response to the situation of undeveloped resources, a low technology base, low commodity prices, economic adjustment and transitions, high foreign debts, population pressures, and labour surplus many developing countries including the Philippines have turned to the export of labour as an increasingly important source of foreign exchange. Concurrently, high-growth countries are relying more and more on the labour of workers from low-growth countries like the Philippines.

The Philippines is one of the largest labour-exporting countries in the world – second only to Mexico. In many countries Filipinos are discernible in highly skilled, specialised, professional, and technical fields and Filipino seafarers are the best in the world, yet they are also found holding the "3D" jobs (dangerous, dirty and demanding) (Roldan-Confesor, 1998).

Initially labour export consisted mainly of men. As far back as the 1700s when the Philippines was under Spanish rule, workers migrated to Mexico in search of work. In the early 1900s, during the time of American colonialism, thousands of agricultural workers primarily from the economically depressed regions of Ilocos and Visayas were recruited as cheap labour to work on sugar and pineapple plantations in Hawaii and Guam, on fruit and vegetable farms in California, and in fish canneries in Alaska (Battistella, 1993; UN, 1998). Their colonial status facilitated this out-flow, which continued until they were classified as aliens when the Philippines joined the American Commonwealth in 1934. The out-flow resumed in 1942 when Filipinos were permitted to apply for US citizenship and could bring their families with them (Battistella, 1993). In the 1950s, Filipinos migrated to other Asian countries to work as barbers, artists, musicians and contract workers. In the 1960s they worked in logging camps in Indonesia and during the Vietnam war they worked in construction for the Americans (UN, 1998). Until the 1970s the government's role in migration was very small.

Since the 1970s the export of labour has been an important means for the government to finance its development. With the enactment of the Philippine Labour Code in 1974 which regulated the number of migrant workers, the Marcos' government actively promoted the export of Filipino labour as part of a national development strategy - a temporary means of addressing some of the country's problems. The Bureau of Employment Services was expanded to regulate overseas workers, the Overseas Employment Development Board was created to recruit landbased overseas workers and the National Seamen's Board was created to regulate the hiring of seafarers (UN, 1998).

In the 1970s, male Filipinos moved to Iran and Iraq as engineers and technicians, while mostly women were recruited by the United Kingdom (the first European country to recruit Filipinos) to work as hospital workers, maids, nurses and hotel workers. In the 1970s and early 80s, the Middle East was enjoying excess revenues from oil production so between 1974 and 1983 Middle Eastern countries imported labourers from neighbouring countries. Starting in 1975 mainly male Filipinos began migrating there to work in construction. In the 1980s the number of Filipino labourers, which had become increasingly feminised as service jobs opened up, peaked at 323,000 in 1984. A fall in oil prices in 1986 resulted in a decrease in imported labour to these countries. But in 1990 the number of expatriate labourers rose again (Battistella, 1993; UN, 1998). This time the feminisation of the transnational flow of human labour was a significant phenomenon. Of the Asian migrant workforce, women accounted for 15 percent in the 1970s, 25 percent in the 1980s, and 50 percent or over in the 1990s (ILO, 1996). In the Philippines, women accounted for between 50 and 59 percent of the landbased migrant workers from 1990 to 1997 (DOLE, 2001). Of the total landbased Filipino migrant workers destined for Asia, excluding the Middle East, women account for 94 percent (ILO, 1996). The majority of women OCWs are between the ages 20 and 34, the highest number of these are between 25 and 29 years (figure for 1996) (DOLE, 2001), the age bracket where productivity is at its peak.

For the year 2000 the total number of deployed Filipino migrant workers (men and women) who work on fixed terms from six months to two years (here on referred to Overseas Contract Workers or OCWs) is estimated at 850,000. Landbased migrant workers make up approximately 650,000 (based on the extrapolation of the first quarter figure of the year 2000 provided by DOLE, 2001). The largest number of deployed OCWs is destined for Asia[7] (approximately 300,000) and the Middle East[8] (approximately 290,000). From 1991 to 1997 OCWs remitted US$17.7 billion through official banking channels and in that same time frame at least 40 percent of the net income from abroad came from OCWs[9] (CWR, 1998). If remittances from non-banking and informal channels are factored in the amount could easily be doubled. This amount of foreign exchange has helped to contain the country's trade deficits and at times has saved the country from economic collapse, especially during the rise in oil prices and slump in exports during the Gulf War in 1990 (Roldan-Confesor, 1998). In the year 1999 (the latest figure available from DOLE at this time) remittances from all OCWs totalled US$6,794,550,000. In addition to remittances, the government makes millions of dollars and pesos from OCWs through fees (e.g. for passports, clearances, processing fees, etc.) and through taxes (OCWs pay taxes in the Philippines and in the host country) (CWR, 1998).

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[7] Hong Kong receives the highest number of Filipino OCWs, then Taiwan, Japan, Singapore, Brunei, Malaysia, Korea and other Asian countries (DOLE, 2001).

[8] Saudi Arabia by far receives more Filipino OCWs than any other Middle Eastern country – (approximately 200,000), then the United Arab Emirates, Kuwait, Qatar, Libya, Bahrain, Oman, Lebanon, and other Middle Eastern countries (DOLE, 2001).

[9] Three examples from three separate years demonstrate the importance of the OCW remittances: In 1994 remittances through official banking channels amounted to US$2.94 billion or 20 percent of export earnings and as much as 4 percent of the GDP (Roldan-Confesor, 1998). In 1996, OCWs remitted US$4.7 billion a year, equivalent to around 20 percent of export earnings (Oxfam, 1997).

Lim & Oishi (1996) note that compared to men and other women in other parts of the world, Asian women are flexible in quickly responding to demands in overseas markets. This flexibility is attributed to a number of factors: the more liberal socio-cultural attitudes of Southeast Asian countries (compared to South Asian and Arabic countries), which have allowed women to work overseas; the high rate of females participating in their own countries; the role of governments and intermediaries in promoting women's migration; and strong social relationships and networks of obligation.

### (f) Filipino women migrants

Many Filipino and other Asian women migrate to work in "feminised" jobs as nurses, secretaries, teachers, entertainers (Battistella & Paganoni 1996), but a significantly large number are employed in domestic service. It is estimated that 1 million to 1.5 million Asian women are working in other Asian countries and the Middle East as foreign domestic workers. Each year at least 100,000 women leave Asia's developing countries to work in its newly industrialised economies (Seager, 1997).

Within the Philippines, migrant women are largely concentrated in the service sector – they accounted for between 82 and 89 percent of the newly hired service sector workers each year from 1990 to 1997 (DOLE, 2001). In contrast every year since 1991 at least 60

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In 1997 Filipino OCWs remitted over US$5 billion. This amount doubles if including non-formal channels. This is nearly the same contribution from the entire agricultural sector and is about 18 percent of the GNP (KAKAMMPI, 1998).

out of 100 women OCWs are domestic workers (CWR, 1998). Approximately half a million Filipino women are domestic workers all over the world but no exact estimate is available as many are unauthorised workers (Vasquez, Tumaga & Cruz-Soriano 1995). In the high-growth countries there is an increasing demand and shortage of social reproduction labourers and in poorer countries there is an excess of labour supply - the transfer of female labour for waged domestic work has emerged as a means of addressing both problems. However, although both sending and receiving countries derive some benefit from this flow of migration, the relationship between the countries is unequal and exploitative with the wealthier highly capitalised countries dictating how the relationship develops (Bonacich and Cheng, 1984).

In recent years we have seen an increase in the number of Filipino women answering the global demand for more nannies, maids, live-in caregivers and domestic helpers, [from here on referred to as overseas domestic workers (ODWs)]. The job of ODW definitely falls within the category of a "3D" job. Along with entertainers, ODWs are in the most vulnerable occupation.

In response to the public outcry on the abusive and dangerous conditions migrant workers face, the government enacted the Migrant Workers and Overseas Filipinos Act of 1995 (Republic Act 8042) which was signed by Ramos in June, 1995. It was: "hastily crafted in a two week special session of Congress after a three year record of zero legislation in favour of migrant workers. It was a direct consequence of the Flor Contemplacion[10] case" (PMRW, 1995).

RA 8042, also called the Magna Carta of Overseas Filipinos, among other things calls for greater protection of overseas Filipino workers, yet it has failed in this (Kakammpi, 1999). The Act is also full of contradictions, loopholes and incongruities. For example, it suggests that the government will continue to regulate the flow of migrant labour [Sec. 4 and 5], yet it also suggests a complete deregulation policy emphasising a free market approach to migration (PMRW, 1995). Moreover, the Act declares that "the State does not promote overseas employment as a means to sustain economic growth and achieve national development" [Sec. 2 (c)] yet it also states that "the deployment of Filipino overseas workers by local service contractors and manning agencies shall be encouraged" [Sec. 2 (i)]. Battistella (1997) charges that the Magna Carta clearly admits the government's role in overseas employment in its statement that the government's overseas employment program was to be periodically reviewed "in view of balancing economic demands and the protection of its nationals." This Battistella declares finally ends the longstanding debate between those that claimed the government is merely regulating the inevitable "movement of workers through regulation, protection and safeguards and those that accuse the government of active involvement in labour export because of the economic benefits derived from remittances" (p.83). The Department of Labour and Employment have recognised the flaws in the Act and propose that the government re-examine its policy on migration (Scalabrini Migration Centre, 1999).

Despite the statement that "the State does not promote overseas employment as a means to sustain economic growth and achieve national development", it is clear that the "temporary" labour export policy of Marcos in the 1970s has become a permanent strategy to do just that. In fact the government's perspective (DOLE n.d.) "considers migration not as a shameful necessity but a form of utilization of human resources, a sound approach to maximizing the comparative advantage of the Philippines in the region" (Battistella, 1997: 83). Aquino called the OCWs "new national heroes" and Ramos referred to them as "internationally shared human resources" while in the 21st Century under Estrada's and Arroyo's presidencies the OCWs are still apparently considered the country's economic lifesavers.

The pool of research about the phenomenon of female migrant domestic workers has grown significantly recently. Studies initiated by both government and non-government organisations as well as scholars and social activists include case studies of Overseas Domestic Workers from countries of Asia, the Caribbean, Latin America, and Europe in the receiving countries of the Middle East, North America, Europe and Asia. A review of

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[10] As stated in the introduction Contemplacion, a domestic worker, was hanged in Singapore in 1995 for murder despite evidence that she may have been innocent.

research reveals that most attention has been paid to the issues and problems of domestic work. Injustices have been documented and recommendations have been made yet the role of education has not featured as central in the lives of migrant domestic working women. Rather it is often mentioned mainly as a means for the women to get legal employment as ODWs. Overall there is a relative lack of research and analysis of the role of education in the overseas domestic work phenomenon.

### (g) A critical feminist pedagogy for ODWs

Under the dominant paradigm of education, whether in formal or non-formal contexts learners are viewed as passive repositories of values, knowledge and skills deemed "valid", "important", and "functional" by existing power structures. As the Brazilian critical educator, Paulo Freire (1981) has aptly argued, this is a "banking" paradigm of education. It results in citizens whose consciousness of their world reflects the hegemonic status quo that largely benefits the interests of societal elites and allied groups.

In contrast, the framework of critical feminist pedagogy (CFP) is a form of non-formal education based on the principle strategy of "conscientization" or critical empowerment whereby learners become critically aware of their realities, understand the root causes of their problems, and seek to transform these realities towards greater justice and emancipation.

This truly democratic non-formal educational process involves the development of critical and democratic thinking, which cannot be achieved through the passive "banking" kind of learning. Learners are actively engaged, reflecting on their own experiences, defining their own needs and problems through the holistic critical understanding of the complex inter-relation of the global, economic, political, social and ecological systems. "Conscientizing" (or *conscientização*) refers to "learning to perceive social, political and economic contradictions and to take action against the oppressive elements of reality" (Freire, 1981:19). For migrant workers' *conscientização* requires an understanding of societies provided by critical reason in order to challenge hegemony. Hegemony attempts to place beyond question the existing inequalities ODWs are experiencing. Reflecting on their experiences while at the same time collectively analysing the role of social and historical practices- exploring and uncovering the overlapping and interlocking multiple forms of oppression ODWs come to an understanding of their role as "knowers of the word and the world" which is vital for the continuous quest for social transformation.

There is no assumption that the category "women" is universal because women differ based on class, race, ethnicity, and sexual preference – this of course includes teachers and students. Critical feminist pedagogy respects and acknowledges differences in teachers and students. The teacher is considered a facilitator of a collective educational process who helps to contribute to the formulation of new knowledge. He/she is also aware of the power of his/her various subject positions and acknowledges the realities of conflict and tension between his/herself and his/her students.

The Philippines has a rich history of NGOs – NGOs that emerged in response to intolerable living conditions, the disillusionment with development programmes, the ineffectual nature of government programmes, and political struggles. Philippine NGOs have been active in grassroots empowerment for men and women migrant workers for at least 30 years providing educational, financial, legal and emotional support, shelter and other vital services that government has failed, stalled, ignored and refused to provide. In addition, these NGOs have given voice to migrant workers who have been victimised by governments' policies and have advocated for change. Many of these migrant worker NGOs have been established for and by migrant women, addressing issues, needs and problems that are unique to women, particularly women who are employed as entertainers and domestic workers. Many of these NGOs have established links nationally, regionally and internationally. In addition, a few of the NGOs for migrant workers offer non-formal education which goes beyond the PDOS and attempts to enlighten migrant women to a range of migrant issues. It is in these spaces using a critical feminist pedagogy that migrant women can contribute to the formulation of new knowledge that addresses their problems and the problems of their communities, decide on the actions that they and their communities must undertake for improvement and take action.

### Statement of the research problem

This study clarifies in detail the educational dimension within the complexities of the overseas domestic workers phenomenon from the largest sending country - the Philippines. It explains how informal education, non-formal education and formal education relate to the lives of the domestic workers before, during and after the ODW experiences. It explores the intersections between these educational experiences/forces and the wider realities of Philippine "development". It examines the ways in which those educational influences were/are empowering or disempowering in the lives of ODWs in these three phases (before, during and after the ODW experiences). It addresses how policies and practices of state agencies and institutions of civil society, especially non-government, community and people's organisations impact educationally on ODWs in the context of national development policies. And finally it presents some educational strategies and alternatives that would address the needs and concerns of ODWs.

Many studies indicate that ODWs generally have at least secondary education (a large number have tertiary education) and they are mostly underemployed (few had experience as domestic workers before they went overseas). Yet many of these studies do not take a comprehensive look at the role and influence of education in the lives of ODWs other than to say that a high school education has been helpful in securing a job as domestic workers. What is missing from studies of Filipino ODW experiences is the consideration of the role that education plays in the "complex interaction of patterns of economic transformation, cultural traditions, societal perceptions of the role of women, and female responses to social forces" (Zosa-Feranil 1991:13). My research will explore the role of education within a holistic framework of the complexities of Filipino women's ODW's experience.

In sum, the research problem I will be addressing focuses on two key questions: **(1). What has been or could be the role of education in its various modes (formal, nonformal and informal) in constructing the identities and influencing the lives of Filipino ODWs before, during and after their ODW experience? (2). How might the needs, concerns and rights of ODWs be better met through the transformation of relationships**

**between the educational and the economic, social, political and cultural sectors of the Philippine society and/or the host countries of ODWs?**

## PERSONAL INTEREST

The jobs of house cleaning, baby-sitting and answering to the beck and call of people are hard, tiring, low-paid, undervalued and often demeaning jobs which few people enjoy. Even fewer enjoy doing these jobs 24 hours a day for someone else's family. Yet the job of live-in domestic workers is readily available for women, particularly migrant women and/or women of colour, who have few job choices, insecure immigration status and are in need of money.

There are two experiences in my life that I can pin-point as important factors to my incentive for doing this research. The first involves me indirectly: the experience of my mother as a domestic worker in similar yet also quite different circumstances as the Filipino migrant domestic worker.

My mother began her working career as a live-in domestic worker in a foreign land when she was 15 years old. From 1954 to 1957 she, a young Black girl from a small secluded island in the Atlantic Ocean, worked as a domestic for a wealthy white family in England, 5000 miles away from home. When she immigrated to Canada with my Dad, sister and brother, her job options were limited due to her lack of formal education, but over the years people in the neighbourhood called her to clean their homes, perhaps with the assumption that she, the only Black woman for miles and by then a mother of four, would be good at it and happy to have the work. She was unhappy at this job and I came to see it as a very lowly occupation with little reward and respect.

Years later, in 1988 when I was teaching in Kuwait I gave private English lessons to children at their homes after school hours. For a year I taught two Kuwaiti children who lived in a very large, expensive, ornate, air-conditioned four-story home; each floor connected by an elevator. The family was serviced by nannies, maids, gardeners, chauffeurs and cooks of Filipino, Indian, Sri Lankan and Egyptian nationalities. During each and every lesson I taught at this house, a young Filipino maid served me mango juice and sweets on a silver platter. She was ignored by the children and given orders by the mother. She always walked silently across the plush carpet, never made eye contact and seemed to try to make herself invisible. On my last day at this house she gave me a tray as usual, but as she stepped away she glanced at the children quickly, who were ignoring her as usual, and quickly put a small piece of paper on the tray and left. I carried the paper home before I read it. It simply said, "Help me, teacher. Please. I need someone to help me".

After receiving that note, I became aware of the circumstances of Filipino maids by talking to colleagues, following the court cases in the newspaper that involved maids and reading the letters to the editor from maids pleading for help and justice. I also became aware of the negative attitudes toward "maids" not only of the Kuwaiti nationals but also by my colleagues from Britain and North America. Three white American women and a Black British woman immediately dismissed the maid's concerns. They told stories of maids who often made up stories of sexual abuse and got the men of the house in trouble. Two said they had Filipino maids who were never allowed out of the house. One said, "If we let her out she would get together with other maids and they would give her ideas about how to get me or my husband in trouble. You don't know how they think. It happens a lot you know. I see them all together after church on Friday in the Sheridan Circle. They're probably scheming of ways to get back home without finishing their contracts." I was advised that there was nothing I could do to help because she would have to go to the embassy herself with her passport (which was held by the employer) and even then there was no guarantee the embassy could do anything for her, as it has so many cases to deal with and limited money to send people back to the Philippines. I (and others) felt helpless, frustrated and afraid of speaking about it too much for fear of being accused of criticising, even plotting against the government and consequently being imprisoned and/or deported. I never saw the young Filipino maid again. I never found out what help she needed, I never helped her and I will never know what became of her.

In 1992, when I came to Edmonton to do my Masters in Intercultural Education at the University of Alberta, I joined a Filipino-Canadian non-government organisation called

LINGAP, through which I met Filipino migrant workers some of whom had come to Canada as Domestic workers. Through them and other contacts, I undertook a qualitative, ethnographic research for my Masters' thesis on the perceptions and experiences of Filipino Live-in Caregivers in Alberta. In this study I looked at the contexts of the Live-in Caregivers' work and life experiences and the role played by the state and education in shaping the identity of the Filipino caregiver. I learned that the poor treatment domestic workers receive is not limited to Kuwait. Although I had never anticipated hearing about experiences similar to the ones I knew about in Kuwait, I did hear accounts of exploitation, abuse, discrimination, their modest self-sacrificing for their families in the Philippines and their frustration of not finding work that paid higher than minimum wage or work for which they had been educated (all of the women interviewed had tertiary education in the Philippines) after completion of their domestic work contracts. I also heard stories of community support, learned about their strategies for coping and their hopes and dreams for the future.

Some of the major findings of my study in regards to education included the problem that their secondary and tertiary diplomas or degrees were not accepted in Canada, yet their efforts to up-grade were frustrated by lack of money (as they send most of their remittance to family in the Philippines and the $20 education fee that the employer pays to the caregiver is insufficient), lack of time off, lack of energy after work, transportation problems, and the courses they would like to take are not offered at a time that they could attend. Furthermore, caregivers on contract are not permitted to take formal certified education courses due to their visa status unless they are successful in their application for a student authorisation from Citizenship and Immigration Canada. To qualify for the student authorisation they must demonstrate that they have a place to live, show that the studies are part-time, and present a letter from the institution stating they are accepted in the part-time course. The authorisation costs $125.00 and is valid for one institution only. The research left me with many more questions than when I had started. The study was only a small beginning of a much greater interest.

Through my course work and the examination of the theories of education, development, modernisation, globalisation, feminism, identity, ethnicity, race, class and post-modernism I saw a larger picture coming into focus. I saw the need for a more holistic understanding and analysis of economic, political, social, environmental, cultural, and historical factors which influence the lives of all people in all parts of the world, particularly the lives of female migrant workers from the Philippines.

## Significance of the Study

This study contributes to the knowledge and understanding of the overall phenomenon of overseas migrant labour, with special reference to female ODWs from the South sending country, the Philippines. It focuses on the human rights aspects of overseas domestic work as well as the educational dimensions of the ODW experiences in the three stages, pre-departure, during ODW stage and post-ODW stage.

The study suggests implications for experience and practices in the Philippines context that may address the problems embodied in the ODW experience. Moreover, the study contributes to the understanding of how ODWs' lives are affected by laws and policies both in the sending country and in the receiving countries. Through this understanding, suggestions are made as to how to improve ODWs' lives in all three stages and the important role education in all its modes play, directly and indirectly, in both sending and receiving countries.

It is also valuable in understanding the role that NGOs play in enriching education in the lives of ODWs, by clarifying how they contribute to the holistic framework for women's education, empowerment and human rights.

The findings also have implications for institutionalising government policies regarding overseas migration and specifically ODWs, that benefit the overseas migrant worker by taking into account the realities of development affecting the lives of South peoples.

# Chapter Two: Literature Review

## Introduction

The following review of literature is a conceptual analysis of the Filipino migrant women domestic worker phenomenon and the role of education for overseas domestic workers. It is developed in five sections: (a) the role of labour in development, (b) the feminisation of migrant labour in the global economy, (c) Philippine social and cultural issues, (d) education and the production and reproduction of labour, and (e) education for transformation.

## (a) The Role of Labour in Development

In North-South relations, the mobilisation and exploitation of cheap labour of the South has played and continues to play a substantive role in the economic growth and "global development" which has previously benefited the North in general and elite South sectors. The expansion of the European colonial (and later the United States) empires from the sixteenth to the mid-twentieth centuries occurred before and during industrialisation in Europe. As the modern world system based on capitalism expanded, a more diverse range and a larger amount of products were required (i.e. minerals like copper and industrial crops like jute and cotton) and the demand for tropical products increased (i.e. sugar, tea and coffee) (Bernstein, Johnson & Thomas, 1992). The colonies provided both raw materials and markets for manufacturing production by European capitalists. In some cases the European colonisers introduced export crops on a large scale, such as cocoa, coffee, sugar cane and peanuts which led to the modification of native habits and consequently had an impact on the health of the natives. It also led to a loss of tropical forests and desertification of land. These effects are still felt in the countries of the South today.

Whether colonisation occurred for strategic or economic reasons it was necessary for the colonisers to organise the productive capacity of the colony in order to bear the cost of colonial administration and the military presence. Extractive industries and tropical agriculture required a massive cheap labour force. The indigenous populations were too small in numbers to produce these commodities, either because they were resistant to enslavement or they were destroyed by arms or disease brought by the Europeans. Forced labour (i.e. slavery and indentured labour) filled this need. Slavery (especially for West Africa as a major "supply source") brought massive social disruption and depopulation, and had profound consequences for social differentiation and cultural patterns that are still felt today. Another form of forced labour regime was indentured labour. Most indentured labourers were driven from their families, land and home countries by debt or hunger due to the commercialisation and exploitation of their crafts, which were undersold by products produced by new factories.

Some of the indentured workers became semi-proletarian as they were permanently caught in debt bondage or were involved in periodic labour migration regimes. Petty commodity production was established by the agriculturalists' need for money to pay taxes. The monetisation of taxes pushed the peasantry into producing cash crops for export markets. "Semi-proletarian, proletarian and household labour were all reproduced within capitalism as a result of economic compulsion, and consequently have persisted in the Third World after the demise of colonialism" (Bernstein, Johnson & Thomas, 1992).

Colonial legislation and administration of taxation, land titles and commercialisation of agriculture altered the rural subsistence-oriented societies and resulted in the formation of new social classes among the indigenous people. The commercialisation and monetisation of economic life introduced with colonialism have continued in virtually all post-independent South countries as the local elite embraced the modernisation paradigms of growth and development (Bernstein, Johnson & Thomas, 1992).

In the Philippines, direct political control by Spain began in 1560 when Philip II of Spain ordered another expedition following the death of Magellan, the Portuguese explorer who came across the "Philippines" islands in 1521. Magellan was killed during his interaction in a conflict between two indigenous chiefs. Over the succeeding four centuries of Spanish rule, the majority of Filipinos provided cheap, often coerced labour in a range of services useful to Spaniard economic development. These included the growing of spice and other exportable natural or agricultural products (e.g. tobacco, silk, coconut, lumber, fibre alternatives, and gold). The parcelling out of large tracts of land to Spanish colonisers and a few indigenous leaders laid the seeds for agrarian inequalities and the formation of a large source of cheap, repressed rural labour.

In the last three decades of the 18th century, the Filipino nationalist movement led by middle class intellectuals like Jose Rizal and del Pilar, challenged Spanish rule. However, although the armed revolution (1886-98) succeeded and an independent republic was declared on June 12, 1898, the USA decided to make the Philippines an American colony. The ensuing Philippine-American war lasted until 1906 leaving one fifth of the Philippines population dead before the US victory. American rule established a framework of economic and political dependency, including inequitable trading relations and the presence of US military bases. By 1932 almost 85% of Philippine trade went to the US (NI, 1990). Modern schooling expanded according to American philosophy and hundreds of US teachers were shipped in. The language of business became English rather than Spanish. The US political model of "liberal democracy" and self-rule were initiated in 1935.

In 1941 during World War II, the US abandoned the Philippines to the Japanese whose occupation imposed enormous suffering on the Filipino peoples. Independence came in 1946, but there were strings attached. The US demanded naval and air facilities in the Philippines rent free. Various unequal trading treaties promoted American interest at the expense of Filipino domestic economic development. American economic dominance was increased through US investments in business and agriculture. Due to the growing inequalities in the countryside, a peasant based revolutionary movement (Huks) arose. American advisors and aid flowed into the Philippines to combat the "menace of communism" and the Huks were subdued. The process of Americanisation continued as many leading Filipinos went to the US for training.

By the end of World War II the world economy was in disarray. Rising unemployment and heavy protectionism resulted in a decline in world trade accompanied by a drastic fall in primary commodity prices which was the major source of income for developing countries. Dominated by the Western powers, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank (WB) system was set up at a conference at Bretton Woods, New Hampshire, USA in 1944.

The answer to capital scarcity and declining terms of trade was to move from nation-centred economic behaviour to internationally co-ordinated finance and trade. The industrialised countries which continued to hold the dominant position in the world economy (and who later formed the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) favoured the Bretton Woods agreements (Allen & Thomas, 1995).

Bretton Woods set the context for post-war development in the Third World. Based on the modernisation paradigm, it was believed that the process of development of the Third World countries involved moving from traditional society through a linear series of stages of growth based on the advanced industrialised societies of Europe, North America and nowadays, Japan. Yet, while the industrialised countries of the North experienced a period of economic recovery, prosperity and 'development' for twenty years after the war, most of the developing countries of the South were simultaneously experiencing 'underdevelopment'. While growth did occur in some developing countries, most of the developing countries were not "taking off" as the modernisation paradigm predicted.

The Philippines as a whole in the 1960s experienced an increase in wealth although the benefits did not "trickle down" to the poor. Most of the export businesses were owned or controlled by Americans and attempts at land reform were stifled by the Filipino landlord dominated Congress (NI, 1990).

In the 1960's, as evidence emerged of increased marginalisation of poor sectors despite economic growth, the modernisation paradigms favoured by North and South governments and the international financial institutions (e.g. IMF, WB) came under challenge. Dependency theorists such as Frank (1969) and Bernstein (1977) viewed underdevelopment as a historical condition of distorted, blocked and dependent development. Development of the North was at the cost of underdevelopment of the South since the "periphery", "satellite" or "hinterland" South countries are 'dependent' on the advanced "core", "metropole" or "centre" North countries. In this framework of external dependency, the collaborative allied role of local South elite sectors is clearly recognised. The Dependency theorists refer to the "internal colonisation" that is manifest in the subordination of particular regions to the capital city, of rural to urban areas, of poor to rich, of sharecropper to landowner and of women to men (Oakley, 1991).

Related critical analysis based on concepts of a "world system and unequal exchange" (Frank, 1969; Wallerstein, 1974; Emmanuel, 1972; and Amin, 1974) explain how the South became suppliers of cheap labour and raw materials and recipients of finished products and surplus capital. Underdeveloped countries receive an unequal exchange for their raw materials and their labour power. They are forced into a dependent state and are at the mercy of world markets for the sale of their commodities while transnational corporations and the financial institutions shape dominant economic and political policies that largely benefit external and local elites and marginalise the rural and urban poor, and specific sectors such as women and indigenous peoples. Drawing on the structural analysis of dependency theory, other social movements (e.g. liberal theology and Third World feminisms) critiqued the injustices fostered by modernisation.

These critical perspectives call for autonomous development strategies (Chambers 1983, Oakley 1991), "liberation, emancipation and *conscientization*" where people can become more fully agents and subjects of their realities and processes of change (Fals Borda, 1988; Freire, 1981; Guitierrez, 1973); "people-centred development" (Korten 1984, 1990; Gran, 1985), and "participatory development" (Burkey, 1993; Bhasin, 1985; Fuglesang & Chandler, 1986; Nyerere, 1968; Rahman, 1981, 1992) in which developmental policies and programmes accord people a central role in implementation; and "ethical development" where development is shaped by the people's values and the changes they consciously accept as upholding their quality of life (Goulet, 1975).

In the Philippines, through the 1960s and 70s the modernisation paradigm of growth and dependency shaped national and local economic and political policies. Ferdinand Marcos (who had been president since 1965), declared martial law in 1972 which made the country even more attractive for foreign investors. US aid increased (they doubled military spending to $40 million a year) and commercial loans flooded in, but a lot of this money was corruptly siphoned off to fund the extravagant lifestyle of Marcos and his greedy "cronies" (business people). Marcos' adherence to such modernisation was well supported by the international financial institutions (IFIs). The rich-poor gaps widened and rural underdevelopment fuelled the growth of sympathy for the urban poor. The gross excesses and repressive policies of the Marcos regime in the late 1970s provoked strong resistance from a range of above and underground movements, including human rights groups, radical students, churches and the New People's Army. The New People's Army is the armed wing of the reconstructed communist party of the Philippines, which waged an armed insurgency struggle. These resistance movements were met in turn by US-backed counter-insurgency programmes. In the Southern island of Mindanao, Muslim groups sought secession through an armed struggle in which hundreds of thousands of people died or were displaced.

The 1970s saw the substantial increase of indebtedness of the developing countries of the South. The Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) oil savings surpluses grew, yet the demand for credit declined in the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries, which were experiencing an economic recession. As a result, the commercial banks turned their attention to the developing countries of the South. Recycled OPEC dollars were hard to resist. However, South governments had to pay more and more to service their debts while receiving less for their exports (as the North countries were trying to reduce inflation by slowing down their economies, depressing prices and demand for commodities and raising interest rates). The deterioration of economic conditions in the biggest debtor country, Mexico was a major symptom of the debt crisis.

In response, programmes for stabilisation and structural adjustment were forced upon the South countries to achieve a quick, short-term improvement in the balance of payments. Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) were preconditions set by the IMF and the WB for further lending of funds. They were intended to relieve the Third World debt crisis by converting economic resources to production for export and promote the penetration of TNCs into previously restricted economies to "strengthen" the economies of the South countries. Other restrictive policies included a reduction in public expenditures and currency devaluation. Overall SAPs impacted most heavily on the poor and other vulnerable sectors. The Philippines began to expand its international debt under the Marcos regime but essentially similar policies were followed by the post-Marcos regimes of Aquino, Ramos, Estrada, and the present administration of President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo (often referred to as "GMA"). As NGOs like the Freedom from Debt Coalition have noted, the present debt burden of the Philippines ($40 billion) exacts a heavy toll on the ability of the poor and marginalised to meet their basic needs. Furthermore, environmental destruction is aggravated by the push for accelerated export earnings.

Another vital facet of the globalisation of the world economy is the role of the TNCs, which dominate virtually every sector of industrial, economic and financial activity. Between them they control a large portion of world trade, investment, knowledge and employment. They have annual sales of billions of dollars and can exercise disproportionate influence over South economic policies. TNCs have clearly played a role in transforming the global economy leading to the emergence of the new international division of labour (NIDL). The result is a massive migration of capital from major OECD countries in the North to low cost production sites in the South (Ernst cited in Gordon 1988) for which vast quantities of products flow back to meet North consumer demands.

It is important to note that not all developing countries were experiencing a severe "reversal of development" in the 1980s. The export-led industrialisation processes in the NICs (newly industrialised countries) especially in South East Asia such as Hong Kong, Singapore, South Korea and Taiwan prospered in economic terms and even the "second-tier NICs" such as Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia and the Philippines, registered remarkable economic growth through the 1980s.

In the NIDL process local elite in the periphery impose policies that increase dependence on the metropolis. They ensure that TNCs will stay by providing "export processing zones" which allow TNCs to keep wages and benefits lower than they would be in advanced industrial countries, to exploit workers (by waiving worker protection legislation that increases labour costs and ensuring 'interference' caused by trade unions and labour arbitration does not occur), to use inexpensive electricity rates, roads and other physical infrastructures, and to avoid tariffs and taxes.

Women have been victimised by these policies. Women's share in the labour force continues to rise and almost everywhere women are working more outside the home even though the responsibilities of their unremunerated work at home and in the community have increased. Women's remunerated work is increasingly relied on to sustain the household yet women are prevented from gaining access to property and financial systems. Millions of women are forced to migrate to cities or other countries where they struggle to survive, having to accept the most menial or marginalised jobs.

Globalisation - the restructuring of global capitalism, the emergence of a new international division of labour, the integration of financial markets and growing TNC capital - is uneven in scope and its effects highly differentiated (McGrew, 1992). The international labour migration of contract workers must be understood as the outcome of the uneven development processes and gross wealth disparities occurring in the sending and receiving countries. Migration has resulted from poverty and unemployment in the sending countries and excess labour demand in the receiving countries. A demand for migrant workers can be created within a country because local labour cannot be recruited for certain types of work. The economic situation in another country may produce people desperately seeking to improve the quality of their lives by migration.

According to International Labour Organisation (ILO) statistics (1990) the total migrant labour force is approximately 25 million, not including illegal migrants. About 70 million people are working in countries not their own (Heyzer et al, 1992). Distinctions are made between migrant workers. First of all migrants may be internal or international. Of international migrants they may be loosely categorised as permanent, temporary or circular migrants. When looking at the purposes or causes of migration categories may be given: asylum seekers, labour migration, contract workers, refugees or environmental refugees. When looking at origin and destination of migrants, South-South, North-South or transcontinental migrants are categorised.

Filipinos have been pushed from their country by unemployment and poverty (along with other reasons) and pulled to other countries by openings in the labour market. Filipinos have the advantage of being above average with respect to their education and fluency in the English language. The vast majority of Filipino migrants are young, single and move primarily for employment. A combination of these factors has led the Philippines to increase its human export: a) an overseas employment boom (Osteria, 1994: xi); b) the regular production by the Philippines of many more degreed people than there are jobs, which has resulted in a credential inflation, and a surplus of educated un/underemployed people; c) heavy pressure to pay off huge debts from the IMF, WB, and other aid agencies. The Philippines' 'interim policy' which is aimed at curbing unemployment by shifting labour surplus to external markets (Tigno, 1988; Wong & Espiritu, 1988) and improving Philippines tight balance of payment, provides much needed foreign exchange to boost the Philippines' economy. Since the 1970s the relatively cheap labour of overseas contract workers' has been crucial in both reducing unemployment and boosting the Philippines' economy. During the 1970s, the market was open for professionals, seafarers and skilled labourers, then from 1977 to 1987 the market shifted to a majority of production workers and in the late 1980s the demand for female and domestic workers outweighed the demand for male and high skilled workers (Urban Rural Mission Christian Conference of Asia, 1990). Since then the Philippines has been dubbed the number one producer of Domestic workers. Filipino Overseas Domestic Workers (ODWs) depart by the thousands for industrialised countries around the world. The demand for Filipino domestic workers has not diminished despite the controversy surrounding overseas domestic work.

There are over 31.7 million workers in the Philippines' labour force. 28.1 million are employed (Philippine Census, 2001), and of this number, an average of 850,000 workers leave the country each year for contract work abroad (DOLE, 2001). In the year 1999 (the latest figure available from DOLE at this time) remittances from all OCWs totalled US$6,794,550,000. As discussed later, gender differences are marked in analysing the overseas migrant labour phenomenon in the Philippines.

### (b) The feminisation of migrant labour in the global economy

Global economic restructuring has resulted in the international division of labour, based not just on nationality, class and race, but on gender. In many South countries, patriarchal biases have permeated the development strategies from independence to the present (Gordon, 1996). The modernisation paradigm of growth and development aggravated these local biases by marginalising the participation of women. With a gender analysis of development some governments and NGOs have advocated for development policies which uphold principles of gender equity. Since the 1970s the field of human development has undergone three phases of practice. They are: Women in Development (WID), Women and Development (WAD) and Gender and Development (GAD).

Women in Development (WID) projects were initially implemented to "integrate women into development". The formal laws and international agreements espoused equality of the sexes. However, the evidence is that they have had little positive impact on women (Stamp, 1989). WID projects and policies are set within male dominated institutions which fail to recognise the importance of gender or attempt to 'graft' gender planning onto existing planning (Moser, 1991).

The sexist stereotypes of men as breadwinners and women as housewives held by both the developing agencies and the host countries' governments (reinforced by the legal and educational systems, the media and family) shape development policies and planning. The development policies have failed to accommodate women and recognise their contribution to the processes of production and reproduction both in the rural and urban sectors. Women's work on the whole has been severely devalued by a universal ideological framework that regards them as inferior bearers of labour and generally defines their work as the property of men (Afsha, 1985). It is a fallacy that the household is a unit wherein women are equal partners to men. Improving the household income does not necessarily translate into better benefits for women and children. The World Bank's projects reinforce the traditional sexual division of labour by helping women grow more food for the household, but given the patriarchal power structure, the results for women are increased demands on women's time to grow more food for the family, to keep prices for food crops low and to work even harder at extra jobs to earn cash (Gordon, 1996).

Development projects for women are usually extensions of their domestic roles, i.e. sewing or craft activities and they are not encouraged to develop new skills or learn new technology that would provide better opportunities and remuneration. Little is done to involve women in large-scale enterprises leaving the "real business of the economy" in the hands of the men (Stamp, 1989; Bennholdt-Thomas, 1988). Women's unpaid labour is not valued in the development process even though their labour, energy and skills are involved in every aspect of the development process. Even in the 1990s, gender has not been taken seriously as women's contributions remain unrecognised and unremunerated in social, economic and political terms (Pearson, 1995).

However, WID policies are evolving. In the 1970s with the United Nations Decade for Women and Plan of Action, equity concerns gained prominence, although many developing countries' governments and developing agencies were reluctant to interfere with the countries' traditions. The WID became the WAD and the emphasis was on fighting poverty with women's productive role as the main focus. It was recognised that women were a wasted resource and their productivity had to be increased in order for development to occur.

The WAD aims were to emancipate and empower women so that they could overcome their subordination and oppressive positions. Feminist theories were infused into WAD policies and practices. It forced a recontextualisation of the relations of women in families, households and communities. However, Rudie (1991:108) warns, "...the feminist movement may have reintroduced a new dosage of ethnocentrism at another level. Western notions of nature and culture; notions about power, equity, and female role dilemmas between employment and family life have been charged spots". Some WAD theorists have turned their focus on the relations between patriarchy and capitalism. Following the heels of Dependency Theories, the world is presented as a dichotomous centre and periphery, men as capitalists and women as non-capitalists, non-creators of capitalism (cf. Mies, 1991). The victimhood dogma is perpetuated in WAD writings. However, in the dynamic rewriting and re/conceptualisation of the South women, it is imperative that "an approach to development recognises the connection between knowledge and power, and seeks to understand local knowledges both at sites of resistance and power [which] would provide a more subtle understanding of Third World women's lives" (Parpart, 1993: 456).

In the 1980s and 90s due to pressure from women's groups and an increase in the number of staff in agencies with a feminist outlook on gender and development issues, the WID and WAD policies showed a significant evolution in orientation. The WAD is now being called the GAD (Gender and Development) to emphasis how gender is constructed by the ways men and women participate in production and reproduction. Yet GAD policies alone cannot empower women. Women can still be economically vulnerable and subject to continued oppression and exploitation unless there are far-reaching changes in women's disadvantaged positions in both domestic and international economies. GAD alternatives are being initiated by feminists in South countries. These focus on empowerment, which involve women challenging all forms of oppression. They are based on women's increasing their self-reliance and their right to make choices and influence change through control over political and economic resources. It means critically questioning the "Western" beliefs of development and having a greater voice in shaping their societies (Gordon, 1996).

Gender has played a role in the expansion and restructuring of labour markets. A certain gender division of labour promotes women's limited access to resources and participation, and allocates the most tedious labour-intensive and poorly rewarded work to women. Women have become sources of cheap, expendable, "docile", exploited and sexual labour. Women's labour has been selectively incorporated into certain areas such as jobs in TNC manufacturing, service occupations such as sexual services which cater predominately to a male clientele from advanced countries, domestic service, petty retail and trading, home-based manufacturing and craft production and laundry work (Chant, 1992).

In many cases it is assumed that domestic workers are hired to facilitate their women employers who are seeking work, but in many Arab countries such as Kuwait, Arab women do not often work outside the home. Therefore it appears that the demand for a Filipino (or another Asian national) domestic worker is not necessarily an economic need, rather it is a demand created to enhances one's social status. Migration streams are commonly South-North or South-South. In the case of migrant domestic workers, the South-South migration streams include the sending countries of Sri Lanka, Indonesia, Bangladesh and the Philippines to the receiving countries of Malaysia, Hong Kong, Singapore and the Gulf countries.

Since the 1980s the overseas market for men has declined while the demand for women as service workers, especially domestic workers and entertainers has increased. Social and cultural influences overlapping with economic reasons encourage overseas migration of women. For example, Trager (1991) states that women are more likely to migrate due to family strategies for mobility and survival than are men[1]. This is discussed in greater detail in the section below under '(d). Social and cultural issues'.

Non-economic reasons for female migration include marriage prospects, marital discord, impossibility of divorce such that migration becomes a substitute, and insecure status for some women (Marokvasic, 1984; Eviota, 1992; Zosa-Feranil, 1991). Zosa-Feranil (1991:13) maintains: "female migration is actually a complex interaction of patterns of economic transformation, cultural traditions, societal perceptions of the role of women, and female responses to social forces."

Once migrants were mostly men[2], now however, an obvious feminisation of migration is occurring. Of the 35 million migrants crossing borders in search of better opportunities in Asia at least half to 60% are female (ILO, 1996). An increase in the number of women in the migration systems has been observed particularly in Asia in the 1990's. An average of 800,000 Asian women migrant workers leave to receiving countries per year (Battistella &

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[1] Wolf (1990) warns however that household survival strategies theory is gender biased and collapses when the household is opened up and the actors speak (49). The women's conditions must be analysed more specifically in terms of age, family life-cycle stage and the type of problem or decision needs to be seen more fluidly (66).

[2] Or perhaps as Morokvasic [1984] noted, until the mid-1970s women were invisible in studies in migration, and when they did emerge tended to do so within the category of dependent men.

Paganoni, 1996). In the Philippines, women accounted for between 50 and 59 percent of the landbased migrant workers from 1990 to 1997. (DOLE, 2001). Of the total landbased Filipino migrant workers destined for Asia, excluding the Middle East, women account for 94 percent (ILO, 1996). Labour markets have expanded due to the availability of cheap labour provided by migrant women who move from rural to urban or from South to North, often to take waged labour in TNCs. Many Asian women migrate to work in "feminised" jobs as nurses, doctors, secretaries, teachers, entertainers (Battistella & Paganoni, 1996), and a significantly large number are employed in domestic service. Domestic service and entertainment work are two of the largest unprotected areas that are particularly vulnerable to abuse.

In the Philippines, the role of women in development policies and strategies have likewise encountered the problems of marginalising, patriarchal structures and increased exploitation as cheap labour in the NIDL and globalised economy. TNCs have expanded their dominance in the agricultural sector via agribusiness, which exploits cheap land and labour resources. In the Philippines context, TNCs, some in collaboration with local elites have dominated economic resources and policies of national development. Export processing zones have provided havens for export oriented businesses in garment and electronics. In the rural areas, agricultural operations are controlled by TNCs such as Dole and Delmonte, while mining explorations exploit the vast mineral resources. These various modernisation policies and strategies lead in turn to a crisis in employment, as capital-intensive operations and the displacement of rural poor by agribusiness and other resource exploitation activities produce a large part of unemployment or underemployment. This accelerates rural-to-urban migration. One overall outcome of the paradigm of development adopted and the availability of poor sector work for many citizens is that there is a huge reserve labour force which has contributed to the increasing phenomenon of migrant labour in the global economy.

In these "zones" women aged 15 to 25 make up 90% of the manufacturing workers especially in the clothing and electronic sector (Froebel, 1977) yet women are largely absent from management and policy levels. The most desirable female employees are young, single, childless, able-bodied, and graduate of secondary school because of "their perceived innocence of industrial labour practices, their supposed willingness to accept orders as a result of their junior status and lack of power within patriarchal households, and the presumed absence of conflicting responsibilities brought about by marriage and motherhood" (Chant & McIlwaine, 1995: 288). The conditions under which they work are often ill-equipped, unsafe, unsanitary, unhealthy and insecure. These jobs are often poorly paid with little hope of career mobility. This feminisation of labour in TNC manufacturing is replicated around the world.

In the Bataan Processing Zone in the Philippines there is discrimination against married women so that women are forced to remain single if they want to keep their jobs (Shivanath, 1982). And after passing the age of 'usefulness', future job prospects are very limited, so women often maintain the traditional hope of marriage and home (Eviota, 1992).

### Filipino Overseas Domestic workers

Social and economic contexts have generated a job niche for transient overseas domestic workers. Domestic workers are employed in the work of everyday life within the domesticity of the home, yet Filipino overseas domestic workers (ODWs) are neither family members, permanent residents nor citizens. The work of the home is commonly regarded as women's "natural" work which women do without training. Therefore domestic work is seen as cheap and an unskilled form of labour. It is genderised, causualised, devalued as informal work, and not on par with formal waged employment. Paradoxically, domestic work is vital and a huge economic reality that involves millions of people, billions of dollars, dozens of countries and thousands of agencies.

In the receiving countries migrant women, particularly domestic workers, are placed in tenuous positions which undermine their capacity to protest inequalities and exploitation in the workplace. Studies have documented the many problems experienced by Filipino domestic workers in various countries (Mission for Filipino Migrant workers, 1983; Philippine Migration Review, 1987; Smart & Casco, 1988; Asian Migrant Workers Center, 1989; POEA, 1990; Beltran & De Dios, 1992; Lega Italo-Filippini Emigrati, 1992;

Malaysian research team, 1992; The women's study centre,1992; Heyzer et al, 1992; Tumbaga, 1993; Brigham, 1995; Vasquez et al, 1995). Some of these studies highlight the conflicting objectives of job promotion and workers' protection (which are the role of the POEA and the OWWA). Abera-Mangahas & Teodosio (1987) and De la Serna (1987) state that as the government takes a more pronounced role in recruitment, workers' protection tends to take a back seat, especially for Filipino Domestic Workers.

The work conditions of foreign domestic workers vary across and between countries and among employers. Cultural, social, ethnic, religious and linguistic forces shape the specificities of experiences. Variations in conditions of employment include working hours, days off, medical care, accommodation and access to household facilities depending on how domestic work is culturally conceived. But where the domestic worker is treated as a bonded labourer or a paid slave whose passport is impounded by her employer, the occurrence of abuse is high. Studies have shown that domestic workers may experience: low job satisfaction; underemployment; violence in the form of physical, psychological (i.e. emotional stress due to the burdens of adjusting to workplace), sexual and verbal abuse; inadequate living conditions; lack of privacy; lack of food; financial burden of labour migration; estrangement from families (Vasquez et al, 1995); breach of contract; payment irregularities; unregulated working hours; assault or rape; insufficient health care; isolation (Silvera, 1986; Devins, 1992; Brigham, 1995); marriage deterioration; solo parenting and neglect of children (Osteria, 1994:4) and other "disadvantages which destroy families" (Paz Cruz, 1987).

### (c). Social and cultural themes: Women in the Philippines

To understand how Filipino women are positioned in Philippine society today it is helpful to look through multi-focal lenses, which make clearer social and cultural issues situated within an historical, political, and economic framework. However, at the outset it is important to note the descriptions of social and cultural themes in the Philippines as it relates to women are generalisations based on research previously conducted – research which has not always included the diversity of Filipino women.

### (i). A brief historical overview

The history of women in the Philippines in pre-colonial times is sketchy and was first recorded by Spanish missionaries. Therefore, it is prudent to keep in mind that the accounts of pre-colonial women were written with a gender, cultural, and racial bias. In their accounts the chroniclers expressed their astonishment at the freedom (including sexual freedom, which was over-emphasised) and status the Filipino women had in society (Camagay, 1995; Dionisio, 1994).

Before the Spanish arrived in the sixteenth century there were many economic systems operating – from the "nomadic agriculture in the North" to the "feudal system in the Islamic South" (Dionisio, 1990: 21). Pre-colonial Filipino women had positions in society that were equal to that of men (Mendoza-Guazon, 1928; Gamiao, 1990). "Women were in charge of the home and active in agriculture and other economic activities while in many places men participated in the household work" (Dionisio, 1990: 21). Women had rights which included the right to: be treated as an equal to her husband; retain her maiden name; sell her property that she brought into marriage as she saw fit; divorce her husband if he failed to provide for the family or if he abused her; lead a barangay; and veto any contract or agreement her husband entered into (Alzona, 1934). Women also enjoyed prestigious positions in society such as "priestess", "medic" and "consoler of the sole" (Gajudo, 1990). Indeed according to ethnohistorical sources among the Visayans and Tagalogs the religious specialists/shamans/spirit mediums (called "*Babaylan*" in Visayan) were usually women, although some were transvestite men, who learned their ritual healing and sacrifice skills from older female relatives with whom they apprenticed, along with their supernatural powers (Scott, 1994; Junker, 1999). Both male and female descendants from chiefs (e.g. offspring from the *datu*'s secondary wives) enjoyed the right of nobility and chieftainship (Scott, 1994; Junker, 1999). Furthermore, royal mothers of potential heirs played an important role in securing political sovereignty for their offspring especially during times of "weak rule [which] was often a time of crisis as princely factions and their supporters jockeyed for power" (Andaya, 1992: 419). Andaya suggests that these dowager queens used poison and sorcery in order to seize the throne for their sons.

During the Spanish period, the role of Filipino women changed dramatically. The missionaries recognised the powerful roles women held in the community and as primary socialisers of children, hence they focussed their conversion efforts on women so that in effect the women became instruments in the colonial subjugation of themselves (Dionisio, 1990). With the introduction of Roman Catholicism and all its trappings Mendoza-Guazon (1928) claims that women were forced to control their emotions and be forever on guard against the devils that populated the earth. Women were to be chaste and devoted servants to men and the faith. Gajudo (1990) adds that women were taught that homemaking was exclusively for women and to be passive and submissive was to be virtuous. Honculada (1994) asserts that the subjugation of women can be pin-pointed to the advent of a class society where a shift occurred from egalitarian and collective access to resources to a paradigm of dominance and subordination. By controlling the social surplus the dominant classes held wealth and power over the majority of people. With the increased possibility of accumulating private property and the understanding of biological paternity, the desire to pass one's property on to heirs, usually to male offspring, became important. To this end new kinship and marriage systems took over from those of the early communities. Marriage evolved to a monogamous patriarchal institution – where women's sexuality and fertility were controlled.

With the influence of industrial capitalism, which was on the rise in Europe in the eighteenth century, women's lives continued to change. Industrial capitalism drew a distinction between waged and unwaged labour, male and female labour. In the nineteenth century the Filipino elite owned and controlled small tenant farms from which they drew their wealth. They had close ties with European capitalists and were exposed to the European ways of living. With the influence of the European gender ideology Filipino men in the upper classes saw to it their girls and women were confined to convent schools, educated in the womanly arts of the home and behaved as Victorian ladies. The women of the peasantry continued in their role in subsistence agriculture although "in some areas this role was undermined by the introduction of male-cultivated crops (e.g. sugar) for the world market" (Dionisio, 1990: 22). Alzona (1934) maintains that women were nevertheless, economically active and in control of home-based retail businesses, farms, and other large-scale businesses. However, political leadership during the Spanish era was left almost entirely to men, with the exception of some women revolutionaries who played active leadership roles.

With the arrival of the Americans came a more liberal ideology, particularly toward schooling. Both girls and boys were encouraged to attend school. The University of the Philippines admitted women to courses such as dentistry, law, liberal arts, medicine, nursing, and pharmacy and an office of the Dean of Women was established in 1916 (Camagay, 1995). Yet, despite this openness Medel-Anonuevo (1992) points out that there was still a stereotyping which streamed women into "feminine" courses - nursing, education, and home economics while men were streamed into engineering, business or law. During this era women became more politically and socially aware and the feminist movement grew. Thanks to the efforts of feminist groups legislation favourable to women was passed (Subido, 1955). In 1937 women gained the right to vote, to occupy political office, and to demand improvement in their working conditions (Camagay, 1995).

In the 1970s and 1980s Filipino women were an important part of the protest movements and the national struggle. However, studies in the 1970s showed that a majority of women accepted the traditionally ascribed role of homemaker and were content with their circumstances (Castillo, 1976; Montiel & Hollnsteiner, 1976; Licuanan & Gonzales, 1976; Aleta et al., 1977). In the 1980s the traditional viewpoint persisted as confirmed by the NCRFW (1984) and by Manalang (1983) who asserted that woman's one principal life world was focused on the family and its survival.

The attitude has persisted in the 1990s up to today as discussed below. In 2001, Filipino women's struggle for economic, legal and social equity continues (NCRFW, 1995) despite the gains they have made over the years.

### (ii). Filipino Women in the 21st Century:

### The influence of the patriarchal family-household[3] ideology and other ideologies that support gender inequalities

The "family" is a troubling institution for feminist analysis (Harder, 1999). On the one hand it has been the central location of women's oppression because of its anti-social nature yet, on the other it has been and continues to be extremely rewarding, meaningful and a rational choice for women – given the present historical conditions (Barret & McIntosh, 1991; Harder, 1999). As the family has been and continues to be of primary importance to the organisation of social life and individual identity it must be critiqued. This is not to "devalue the experience of sharing one's life with a partner or that of bearing, raising, and loving children", but to understand that "institutionally enforced rules of family organisation do not necessarily enhance family life and they frequently disadvantage women" (Abramovitz, 1989: 9).

The family and kinship network is the most highly valued segment in the Filipino's life (Lynch, 1970; Bulatao, 1970; Almirol, 1985).

> The Filipino family and kinship network occupies the highest priority in the individual's loyalty and support since the individual derives social status, honour and prestige from it. (Almirol, 1985:172)

The family and kinship network provides the Filipino an important security net as well.

> A high value has always been placed on striving for economic security of the family. Both husband and wife, and children when they are old enough, are expected to do

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[3] In this discussion I will be referring to the "family-household". Honculada (1994: 84-85) explains the distinction between family and household:

> Family is characterised by kinship and affinal (in-laws) ties and may count within its fold members who are temporarily, periodically or permanently away… Household, on the other hand, may include kin, in-laws and non-kin, such as household help (who may be distant relatives).

In other words the term "family-household" encompasses more than the nuclear family, relatives related by blood and marriage, and those physically present in the residence. In addition, Honculada's (1994) reminds us that the concept of family-household should take into consideration the differently composed households which are on the increase, such as the single-parent, homosexual couples, and non-marital unions, including the *querida* (mistress) households.

> whatever work and make whatever sacrifices are necessary to aid family security. (Vreeland *et al.,* 1976: 114)

Bulatao (1970) reports that family, authority, economic sufficiency, and patience were four classifications of overlapping values found in his study of values. Bulatao interviewed 50 male and 40 female factory workers in Manila. In Bulatao's findings specific to family values, the largest area of the total field of values include:

- The interest of the individual must be sacrificed for the good of the family;
- Parents must strive, even at cost to themselves, to give their children an education;
- Older children must make sacrifices for younger children;
- Even marriage must be put off to help the family;
- Mothers especially sacrifice for their families;
- Parents should be very strict in watching over, protecting and curbing their children who might otherwise meet disaster (especially girls who might meet moral harm);
- Parents believe while a girl is still young she can be taught by whipping and frightening her;
- Women are highly valued for their qualities as mothers and housekeepers;
- A marriage should be kept intact no matter what her husband might do. The woman should forgive an unfaithful husband;
- Away from family, women are insecure, worry about their loss of chastity (pp 94-97).

It is evident that some of the values, which oppress women within the family are left over from the Spanish era.

An important part of the foundation of the kinship system is the social practice called *utang na loob* (Billones & Wilson, 1987). It is a social practice embedded in a moral and ethical principle which expects a favour to be returned (Almirol, 1985). The repayment of *utang* (a debt of gratitude) is ensured by *hiya* (a sense of shame) particularly if the debtor is unwilling to repay even though he/she may be able to. *Hiya* is elaborated on below. Being labelled *walang hiya* or *walang utang na loob* is very serious when it occurs within the family-household. It indicates that he/she does not know how to honour and love his/her parents or siblings (Hollnsteiner, 1970). Vreeland et al (1976) contend that *utang na loob* is the most important interpersonal behaviour that provides a cohesive force in Philippine society. Hollnsteiner (1970) asserts that *utang na loob* reciprocity is designed to achieve security through interdependence between family and non-family members. It stabilises the social system by acting as a bridge between upper and lower classes. A poorer person (e.g. a tenant) lodges a claim on a richer person (e.g. a landlord) by sharing her surplus such as a basket of eggs. The meagre gift ensures abundant return. However, Holllnsteiner suggests that as cash becomes more available throughout the country more Filipinos will evade *utang na loob* reciprocity for fulfilling economic needs. For example a labourer may be hired on a contractual basis to get a job done – ending ties as soon as the job is done. No *utang na loob* reciprocity is developed.

But three decades after Hollnsteiner's prediction *utang na loob* reciprocity continues between neighbours and plays a major role within the family-household unit, particularly between parent and child and between siblings with strong emotions attached to it. *Utang na loob* reciprocity between parent and child is as Hollnsteiner describes "eternal and immeasurable" (72). Nothing a child does in his/her lifetime can repay the parent for giving him/her life and for raising him/her. Just as the younger sibling is everlastingly indebted to the older sibling for "letting the younger ones be born by being born first" (72). In addition obligations toward grandparents by grandchildren are an extension of the parent-child relationship. *Utang na loob* reciprocity is this social practice that participants in Brigham's (1995) study refer to in explaining their sense of obligation to remit a large portion of their monthly salary from Canada. *Utang na loob* within the family-household unit has been criticised as the reason why so many people are pushed into migrating – taking risks, making tremendous personal sacrifices and suffering abuses by employers. *Utang na loob* outside the family has been criticised as the reason for "blind obedience and misplaced loyalty to [a] corrupt boss or government official. It is also one of the motivations behind white-washing our court cases – 'I helped put you in office, so you've got to bail me put of this'" (ECMI, 1996:21).

The 21st century Filipino family generally adheres to a traditional patriarchal structure. Israel-Sobritchea (1990) claims that gender inequalities in the home and in wider society are maintained by cultural values, beliefs, and norms within an ideology of "female nature". This is based on the belief that men and women have distinct biological traits, which define their role and status in society. For instance, women being "weaker, shorter and smaller than men" (13) need to stick to less physical and less taxing kinds of work (even though work prescribed to women may be more taxing than some jobs prescribed for men). Since women and girls cannot "protect themselves from physical harm" they should restrict their movements and stay close to home. Furthermore, women are perceived to be "emotional, sensitive, indecisive and talkative" while men are perceived to be "brave, alert, decisive and highly responsible" – perceptions which restrict women's access to political and economic opportunities (Santiago, 1982 cited in Israel-Sobritchea, 1990).

Angeles (1994) claims that the present patriarchal family structure is historically rooted in the time when men were hunters and warriors who killed food for their families and protected their families while women did subsistence agricultural tasks and cared for their families. Although the sexual division of labour may not have been seen as unequal at that time, the onset of industrial capitalism during the Spanish era, as mentioned above, resulted in a distinct difference in the value of labour between men and women. Men's labour (e.g. in a factory) earned a wage, which provided housing, food and clothing, and women's labour maintained the home. The separation of production from consumption meant family-households depended on male labour for survival – a male role, which carries over into the sphere of decision-making and politics and a devaluation of labour produced by women (Angeles, 1994).

Today in Philippine society the highly visible nature of male labour has gained men recognition as the breadwinner and head of the household. Women are seen as dependants not producers or labourers (Jacobson 1994). The distinctions between male/female roles are clearly understood. This understanding is embedded in culture and tradition with heavy influence from the church. Fear of gossip from within the community and comments from the family-household keeps men and women "in line" with what has traditionally been acceptable. Participants in Brigham's (1995) study explain the sexual division of labour in the Philippines and how it is perpetuated:

> ...it is true that the man is usually the man and the woman does the household chores and the woman is the one to look after the family... It's just part of the culture. We know right away. We just know. We are brought up like that.
>
> [In the Philippines] the roles are more traditional. Usually the man doesn't let his wife work, but some do.
>
> You have to stay in the house and work only with the house and kids. And the guy is always, like, powerful, more powerful.
>
> ... the woman is receiving her salary from her husband and she is in charge of everything. And I saw here in Canada it's different and I don't think it's nice to be like that - [for women] to have their own money.
>
> Probably if my husband complained [about me not doing all the housework], then probably there would be a word from them [family and neighbours].
> (Brigham, 1995: 70-74).

These societal perceptions malign women's status in families and communities and deprecate the true nature and value of their work. In her study of Filipino rural women Miron (1997) reports that her participants were not aware of their actual work roles and contributions to the family. When asked about their work they usually spoke of their traditional household responsibilities or answered "*Wala*" (nothing), yet often in addition to homemaking, the women sewed and sold clothes, raised pigs, ran *sari sari* stores, cared for small children, and operated craft enterprises. Their small income generating enterprises were invisible to the community and to the women themselves. Unlike public sector work the work of small enterprises occurs in and near the household and is therefore not considered "real" work (Beneria 1982, Bruce 1989 cited in Miron 1997). And because their enterprises are small their economic contributions to the family are unacknowledged and undervalued.

The sexual division of labour persists in the Philippines and in most contemporary societies today. Dionisio (1994: 30) points out that in "real life" the division of labour's production and reproduction distinction is not so clear because more women are taking up commodity production in the formal and informal sectors of the economy. However, she concludes: "…most women's jobs in the formal sectors are analogous to their role in the reproductive sphere, while men retain effective control of productive work" (Dionisio, 1994: 30).

Although the sexual division of labour often defines the roles women and men play, there appears to be some flexibility in crossing gender boundaries within the home depending on the household's resources, size and composition (Illo, 1991). It is interesting to note that in the Philippines as elsewhere in the world it is easier for women to cross into the public domain than it is for men to move into the private domain. This is due to the fact that "women's work", reproductive work, is regarded as valueless in society and by undertaking it men are seen as lowering their status, while women taking up "men's work" which is often rewarded with tangible assets are seen as gaining status (Miron, 1997).

To understand the power relations in the family-household unit, it is helpful to look at decision-making. Makil (1995) asserts that husbands and wives have particular decision-making spheres. For instance wives' decisions revolve around the household and childcare while the husbands' revolve around occupational livelihood. And while women tend to be the one in control of the family-household finances, this control does not translate into much if the family-household is in the lower socio-economic bracket because choices of how to spend the money are predetermined by the demands of survival. Furthermore, this exercise of "power" by women rarely carries over outside the private domain.

The family serves as the structural context within which a member decides to migrate as well as the unit for decision making and maximisation asserts Harbison (1981). Indeed many studies claim that the family is the main reason for going overseas (Go and Postrado, 1986; Arcinas, 1991, Osteria, 1994). Trager (1991) claims that women in particular migrate primarily at the behest of their families. Married women are turning to migrating overseas for the sake of the family because while survival of the family is a concern to both men and women traditional gender roles place a higher expectation for personal sacrifice (for the sake of the family) on the women, as stated above.

Single women, particularly the eldest daughters are expected to be responsible for their families - their parents and siblings (Tacoli, 1996). Honculada (1994) adds that single aunts are also expected to sacrifice their personal desires and ambitions for nephews and nieces. Trager (1991) declares that Filipino families rely on their daughters to supplement their income because traditionally, daughters maintain close contact with their families even after marriage. Parents often rely on daughters to be more obedient and less likely to spend money on themselves and send money home. Lim (1989) contends that while the ideology of parent-repayment is not limited to women, it is women rather than men who are more likely to adhere to it. In agreement with this, Tacoli (1996) in her study of Filipino migrants in Rome, reports that women (single daughters and married mothers) have a stronger sense of commitment and obligation to their family-households and are more likely to send home a larger portion of their income than their male counterparts.

The degree of women's responsibility for striving towards economic security of their family-household depends upon the women's age, marital and parental status and with whom they are living. Obligations to family-household change from the parental household to her new family after marriage (Chant and McIlwaine 1995).

In a study of immigrant Filipino domestic workers to Canada, Brigham (1995) found that the youngest unmarried participants (aged late twenties and early thirties) sent home the majority of their salaries (up to 95 percent) to support their parental family-household and hence had no personal savings of their own. The families in the Philippines use the remittances not for survival but for an elevation of social mobility at the household level.

A few of the older single migrant workers also remitted some of their salaries but less than the younger ones because they had invested in their own businesses or property in

Canada. The only married participant in the study did not comment on the amount of money she sent to her family as she was unemployed at that time.

Brigham (1995) reports that the young single women's support of their families does not result in more autonomy or power in decision-making back home in the Philippines. In fact the family-household control over the migrant worker's actions continues in the Philippines and is extended to Canada as illustrated by this participant's narrative:

> [When I went home for a visit...] my brother doesn't let me to smoke. I get spank on my face. Wow! I see stars! My older brother told me, "Even you are breadwinner you can't do that. You can't do what you want to do" (Brigham, 1995: 70-71).

Even from the Philippines her family dictates how she must behave in North America.

Tacoli (1996) supports Brigham's (1995) finding that younger single migrant women do not strengthen their power position in the family with their increase in financial support to the family. Tacoli asserts that even though women have a stronger sense of obligation to their families and remit more of their earnings than men, they have less say in expenditure decisions. Whenever women do have some say in expenditure decisions it is for household budgeting which is in fact an additional burden for them. But, Tacoli adds there is significant difference among women. For young, unmarried daughters in their teens and twenties, the individual decisions to migrate, for how long, how much (if any) personal savings they can accumulate, and if and when they marry are constrained by familial obligations. Unmarried daughters in their thirties and forties usually go overseas for financial reasons rather than family pressure. In the Philippines, children are a source of security when parents are older therefore these childless migrants feel it necessary to accumulate personal savings and to remit some of their wages to their nieces and nephews. By helping nieces and nephews the migrant women can expect their support later in life. Mothers' over forty similarly have more bargaining power in their households than younger mothers. Tacoli concludes that although time abroad may give the women more autonomy their normative roles within the household remain the same, in fact it represents an extension of their maternal or filial duties.

The family-household ideology is supported in Philippine society and the community plays a vital role in influencing the behaviours, regulating and controlling community members so that they conform to the social norms, values and morals. Vreeland et al (1976: 117) states:

> Filipinos are taught as young children to behave in a way that will meet approval and appreciation within the community because what neighbours think and say about each member of the family is important.

Brigham (1995: 130) found that her participants extended financial and other economic support to their families in order to avoid being labelled *walang utang na loob* (ungrateful). One participant said that if she did not send money home her whole community would look down on her for being selfish and "crazy" and her family would be shamed.

### (iii). Social networks and Recruitment

It is evident that all of the participants migrated as a direct or indirect result of social networks, which support migration from their communities. In their study of Mexican workers to the United States, Massey et al (1987) state that the international migration that occurs in communities originates historically in transformations of social and economic structures in sending and receiving societies and once begun migrant social networks grow and develop. These networks support and channel migration on a continually widening scale. Migration takes on its own logic and internal dynamic so that it fuels itself. This is the case for many of the community and kinship networks in the Philippines, which supported the migration of the women either by finding other migrants overseas jobs and/or by financing their migration. When migrants take loans from friends and relatives the loans are usually interest-free as the borrower is expected to find a job for and finance the migration of another friend or relative. Family-households, which have not sent a member overseas are aware of the material gains of migrants and their families and are influenced to consider migration. It is in these ways that the networks result in a snowball effect of out-migration.

### (iv). Migrant women workers

The value systems supported by norms, which are influential in the lives of migrant workers are categorised under three main imperatives: emotional, moral and relational (Andres & Ilada-Andres, 1986). The emotional imperatives are supported by the norms of *hiya, bahala na, awa,* and *amor propio. Hiya* (shame) is discussed above. Lynch (1970) maintains that hiya is an "uncomfortable feeling that accompanies awareness of being in a socially unacceptable position or performing a socially unacceptable action" (16). From *hiya* comes feelings of inadequacy, anxiety, fear of loss, rejection. To reduce this feelings, ODWs may tell their families they are English tutors rather than telling them what their job actually entails (ECMI, 1996).

Billones & Wilson (1987: 153-4) elaborate on the concept of *bahala na:*

> Most Filipinos believe one should unquestioningly accept what life brings them because they believe in destiny being the will of God. This fatalistic attitude helps them persevere with life's difficulties and reflects an external locus of control. The powerlessness to affect what life brings influences the Filipino attitude of living for today rather than planning for the future.

This attitude is traced back to the Spanish influence when the friars instilled in the Filipino the dictum "Ask and you shall receive", although it is claimed that the friars "failed to instil the need for the hardwork, blood, sweat and tears as the present world systems squeeze out of him" (ECMI, 1996: 20). A negative effect of this attitude on ODWs is a sense that they cannot effect change in their work experience because their lives are in God's hands and what happens is God's will.

*Awa* is a sense of mercy or compassion. Although it is a virtue to express *awa* it can also be used negatively, e.g. it becomes the reason to hire someone to do a job for which he/she is unqualified. It is the reason why ODWs seek overseas employment "*Nakakaawa ang pamilya ko*" (I go because I have pity for my family). It can also be turned to oneself (*naawa sa sarili*).

*Amor propio* is self-esteem or senstitivity to personal affront. It is roused by attacks on his/her role as parents, spouse, personal dignity or other core values and may result in violence [in men] (Lynch, 1973: 17). *Amor propio* inhibits the migrant worker from taking criticisms good naturedly even if the criticisms are helpful. It also prevents the ODW from admitting her failure, the entertainer from admitting she does more than sing and dance for her customers and from accepting that the pains of migration are felt more than the gains (ECMI, 1986).

Moral imperatives include *utang na loob, dangal* and *puri, pananagutan* and *katapatan*. *Utang na loob* is discussed above. It is the reason why Filipinos take up ODW jobs and the reason why many of them borrow money to finance their application and travel fees thereby extending the *utang na loob*.

*Danagal* is dignity and *puri* is honour. They are the basis of one's identity and are strictly safeguarded. ODWs therefore will only begin their protest against employers after they have been physically abused.

*Pananagutan* is responsibility, which is taken very seriously. ODWs will take overseas jobs because of a sense of *pananagutan*, just as parents will do whatever is necessary to provide their children with a good quality of life and an education.

*Katapatan* is integrity and is related to *dangal* and *puri* and to honesty. It is being truthful to one's word and standing up for what is right. Migrant workers attribute their success to *katapatan*, and Filipino ODWs may be hired because of their reputation of *katapatan*. However, some may become *tapat* (loyal) to an employer even though the employer is corrupt.

3. Relational imperatives include *pakikiramay, galang, pakikisama* and *bayanihan*. *Pakikiramay* is sympathy. It is helping others even when no help has been requested. It is what brings ODWs together on their days off to share stories and support one another.

*Galang* is the respect given to elders and those in positions of authority. This is a trait that foreign employers desire in ODWs and results in the ODW appearing "meek and humble while being trained or reprimanded" (ECMI, 1986: 22).

*Pakikisama* is the ability to get along well with others. Avoidance of bad or disharmoniuos relationships is important. It may range from being agreeable to yielding to authority out of *hiya* or for fear of being *"walang* (without) *pakikisama".* It is also a social pressure, which can be the reason for corruption in government, the reason behind the ODWs' spending so much of their savings on *pasalubong* for family and friends, and the reason why many returning ODWs will give loans to family and friends despite their plans for their savings (ECMI, 1986).

*Bayanihan* "denotes team spirit, an atmosphere of unselfish cooperation, and a sharing of labour and spirit for the common good" (Steinberg, 1994: 23). It is behind many barn-raisings and in rice harvesting and planting. *Bayanihan* is one reason why many returning ODWs establish and support non-government organisations, which will assist other ODWS.

### (d). Education and the production and reproduction of labour

Education in the Third world did not begin with colonisation. Only schooling, a specific type of *formal* education did. Education before colonisation was informal (e.g. learning within the family or community) or non-formal (e.g. education for initiation rites). Considerable education took place in unstructured settings in the form of apprentice type learning, which linked learning with productive work.

During colonial times education was an instrument for imparting skills, attitudes and knowledge necessary for functioning in a Northern political and economic system. Formal colonial education was divisive - it created new hierarchies in society; it was a means of organising people along hierarchical lines by selecting and discarding students at various levels; it was alienating in that it created contempt for the 'traditional' crafts and particular occupations; it alienated people from their own culture, history and environment promoting disdain for their own culture through the use of irrelevant curriculum; and it provided only certain, minimal skills which excluded not only critical or independent thinking but traditional and still useful economic skills.

The Philippine education system demonstrates how the colonial powers used education for their own purpose in creating this alienation and a particular labour force. Each of the three colonisers left their legacy on the education system. Under each of the three flags the colonisers taught what they believed best for the colonised people. Spain placed the teaching of Christianity above all else, the US believed her mission was to train the Filipinos for democracy, and Japan sought to draw the Filipinos into the East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere (Gregorio & Gregorio, 1976). However, education in the Philippines dates back thousands of years. Most of it was carried orally and through daily life but there is evidence of Philippine alphabets, ancient writings, and historical relics. The pre-Spanish Filipinos kept family records and preserved their literature and written laws. In 1433 the Code of Kalantiao was written (Osias, 1927; Isidro, 1949; Gregorio & Gregorio, 1976). Although a formal organised education system did not exist, informal educational processes were going on in the homes, families and communities.

During the Spanish colonial period, Spanish missionaries taught the Spanish language and forbade the use of the vernacular in the classroom. Formal education was rather sporadic and unorganised until the Royal Decree of 1863, which established a general system of primary instruction (Gregorio & Gregorio, 1976). After the organisation of the schools, Filipinos who could not speak Spanish were not allowed to hold salaried government office and in 1893 only Spanish speakers were exempt from the personal service tax. The Spanish schools were for the upper classes only who were taught to disdain manual labour. The Filipino masses remained excluded from modern literacy as they laboured to maintain the colonial economy and social systems.

During the US colonial period, the Americans tried to inculcate democratic principles and ways of life among the Filipinos through schools that were established for the masses. However the spread of democracy was inhibited by the authoritarian teaching style and religious life (Friend, 1967). The Americans placed emphasis on the English language which was to be the only language used in the school rooms. The children were prohibited from speaking the vernacular and punished if they did. No Filipino could be readily employed in government positions due to their lack of English language knowledge. The goal of the education system was to provide trained men for the economic growth, business and government service. One of the main emphases in the schools was industrial work. In 1909 vocational education was introduced in elementary schools which focused on agriculture and gardening, minor industries, trade and manual training work, and housekeeping (Gregorio & Gregorio, 1976).

Teachers were recruited from the US. Soldiers discharged from the American army in the Philippines remained to serve as teachers. They also trained Filipinos to be teachers' assistants, but there was still a shortage of teachers as Americans were becoming harder to recruit and too expensive to employ and the Filipinos were not well prepared to teach in the public schools. Therefore the government set up a make-shift teacher training system. In 1929 the formal Philippine Normal School tightened its admission policy and required secondary education for its student teachers. Under the US, literacy rates increased from one-fifth to one-half of the population in thirty-six years. Between the urban and rural areas, lower and upper classes, the US spun a web of public education. It fostered a small middle class and provided Filipinos with the means of bettering self and family (Friend, 1965).

During the 1941-46 occupation of the Philippines, the Japanese regimented education. Niponggo took the place of English as a medium of instruction. The Japanese set about re-educating the teachers to make them accept the tenets of the Co-Prosperity Sphere which included knowledge of the Niponggo language, geography and history of the nations of the Greater East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere. The emphasis on vocational education manifested itself in the opening of strictly vocational and technical colleges and the greater slant on vocational education in the elementary curriculum. In the secondary level, the solely academic curriculum was abolished. Later, professional courses were opened for a select group only to meet the demands for professions in society.

As with other newly independent countries, the Philippines felt that educational expansion was a necessary part of the process of decolonisation: an instrument of development or the "key to modernisation" (Harbinson & Myers, 1964). Many countries developed education systems based on the modernisation concept of human capital. Assumptions were made which influenced the type of education that was supported in the South by aid agencies. One assumption was that all countries go through the same educational development stages as the North and the South was simply many stages behind (Beeby, 1968). The other was that the people of the South suffered from various psychological and social deficiencies. The solutions rested in the importation of formal education from the North. The Northern model is what South countries must aspire to (Lerner, 1958).

These assumptions along with the promises of the human capital theory, which assert that people who are educated are more productive and will provide the necessary labour force for rapid economic growth, legitimated the involvement of bilateral and multilateral aid agencies (e.g. USAID, CIDA) in developing education systems and promoting development in the South. It also ensured Southern dependence on the North. The South countries were convinced that wealth, power and prosperity of the industrialised countries could be attained by replicating the formal education system of these industrialised countries, with their emphasis on technology and modern capitalist values.

The political elite of newly independent countries used schooling for a purpose similar to the colonisers: to deliver a particular kind of knowledge in an efficient manner which socialised citizens into accepting development strategies, the modernisation paradigm and their rule (D'Oyley, Blunt & Barnhardt, 1994). For the political elite, education served the hegemonic and economic needs of an emerging industrial society. The ruling elite in the South not only looked to schooling as a solution to problems of domestic conflict (by providing a certain degree of meritocratic social mobility) but also as a way of making their countries more attractive to foreign investment. Furthermore, the South elites could maximise their income and power by maintaining dependency on the North and avoiding development of internal markets which would require undesirable changes in the social and economic structures (Carnoy, 1977). Therefore, the South elites welcomed foreign aid for education, which was willingly provided by North governments as very complimentary to the processes of economic, social and cultural modernisation.

With a burst of investment in education and the expectation of high paying prestigious jobs, those who made it through the education system were disheartened. There simply were not enough jobs for everyone. The economy was not growing at the same rate as the number of graduates produced. Carnoy (1980) adds that imported capital-intensive technology exacerbated unemployment. The rise of educated unemployment was also attributed to a greater discrimination in job selecting. With an excess of "educated unemployed" labour, people are driven to attain higher level certificates to increase their chances of obtaining jobs in a restricted employment market. Underemployment is the result as people with secondary education took jobs from those with primary education. In turn, the demand for higher education increases without regard to the relevance of the educational goods (Carnoy, 1974; Dore, 1976; Bacchus, 1990).

Furthermore, a brain drain occurs as people who are educated move within and between countries of the South and to the North to find employment. While the problem can also be North-North (e.g. Canada to USA) it has been most often the flow of highly educated peoples from Southern countries. The Brain Drain is reinforced when: people are frustrated and dissatisfied with the standard of living and other conditions at home; there is political unrest; countries of the North select immigrants with high levels of education; the salaries in the countries of the North are generally higher than those of the South; students, who are sent abroad to gain "superior" Northern education find that what they have learned is not relevant or applicable to their home country's context; and there is a large number of educated unemployed in the home country.

While some commentators have not viewed the brain drain as detrimental to South societies, others note that the country of origin suffers a range of negative outcomes, including the loss of skilled, talented and educated people in whom their countries had invested resources in their education.

One specific response of South governments and North aid agencies to the problem of educated unemployment and other social problems of modern education (e.g. drop outs) was to propose Non-Formal Education (NFE). In the late 1950s and mid-60s NFE gained theoretical and methodological status and support from the international development agencies as a way of responding to the high cost, unavailability and inadequacy of schools (LaBelle, 1986). It was felt that NFE could be institutionalised and systematised to fit the development activities of the modern state apparatus. NFE would make rural people better economic producers and agents and better able to participate in the modernising state (Coombs *et al*, 1973). However, as discussed below, serious questions can be raised as to whether NFE proposed within the modernisation paradigm is an adequate strategy. NFE was not a supplement to formal education but an alternative. Because NFE lacks credential processes or "social charter" it is merely developing a second class system of education which is patronised only by the disadvantaged sectors of society who will remain disadvantaged thereby reinforcing inequalities rather than reducing them.

In contrast to the dominant modernisation paradigm's approach to education and development, a significant and vocal body of critique and alternative construction of educational development has emerged since the 1970s. Essentially, a critical paradigm questions basic assumptions of the modern educational system inherited from colonialism (e.g. human capital theory, social mobility via meritocratic educational achievement) and considers democratic citizenship skills.

Rather the dominant educational structures and relationships have promoted dependency and neo-colonialism in various ways. Post independence education tended to depreciate or ignore the cultural, historical and social contexts of the South (Altbach, 1975; Carnoy, 1974; Watson, 1980). The flow of educational resources between North and South generally viewed the North as the "depositors" of knowledge, expense and values for "progress" (Altbach, 1971; Mazrui, 1978; Arnove, 1980; Bray, 1984; Zacharia, 1985). Teachers, professors and researchers are also often imported from or educated in the North. Text books, course contents and evaluation methods are often in Northern languages and embrace Northern world views. Hundreds of thousands of Southern students studied in the North contexts and returned well socialised in the modernisation paradigm, unless they were exposed to critical alternatives (Toh, 1996).

Socially, the modern formal education system also reinforced social inequities and inefficiencies (Carnoy, 1974; Eliou, 1976; Foster, 1980; Weis, 1981). Social class combined with regional disparities enabled the middle classes and elites to benefit disproportionately from educational investment. Importantly, gender inequalities were played out in the formal education system. Female students experience more problems than their brothers, as a result of parental attitudes toward their education. Parents often have a preference to educate boys rather than girls (Ashby, 1985). The commitment to educate daughters equally to sons diminishes the more isolated the place (Preston, 1986). Investment in girls' education is not seen as providing a good return for their education as they will 'merely' be wives and mothers in future. Furthermore, a highly educated daughter may be more difficult to marry as it is 'unacceptable' for the husband to have less education than his wife. And girls may be reluctant to attend school as they may experience more hardships on their way to school, such as assaults and/ or harassment. In multiethnic societies, modern education also tended to marginalise many indigenous or ethnic minorities due to language gaps, resources and culturally irrelevant curriculum (Van den Burghe, 1978). In the case of the Philippines, gender inequities in education have been less serious than in other Asian and South countries. A combination of political, social and cultural factors have contributed to relatively proportionate enrolments up to tertiary levels (e.g. role of church based schooling, and US liberal democratic model).

With regard to the educated unemployed, an alternative paradigm of educational development would note the crucial role of the capitalist economic system in the problem (Carnoy, 1979). Hence educational based reforms (e.g. NFE) will not work without accompanying structural economic changes. In the increasingly globalised economy, educational problems cannot be understood without reference to political economy (Pannu, 1996; Toh, 1996).

Politically, socially, and culturally the dominant post colonial educational system needs also to be criticised for fostering a consciousness of depoliticised literacy and a passive acceptance of personal and societal realities (Dore, 1976; Simmons, 1980; Zacharia, 1985; Cawagas, 1992).

### (e.) Education for transformation: towards a critical feminist pedagogy

Over the past four decades an alternative paradigm of education has emerged in both North and South contexts, one which seeks transformation of learners as individuals and also as citizens of local, national, and global communities. Undoubtedly the educator and social activist who has been most influential in education for transformation has been the Brazilian adult educator Paulo Freire. Freire who has been labelled Marxist, idealist, liberal, national-developmentalist, new schoolist, inductivist, spontaneist, nondirectivist, and Catholic neo-anarchist (Gadotti, 1994), provided the base on which other theorists and educators built upon. In the 1960s, Freire taught Brazilian peasants to know/read not only the word but to critically know/read the world by using their knowledge and their literacy to examine the surrounding power structures in the dominant society (Freire & Macedo, 1987). Since his pioneering *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* first published in English in 1970, Freire has published his ideas and strategies for transformative education or critical pedagogy in numerous books (cf. Freire, 1972; 1973; 1976; 1978; 1985; 1987; 1989; 1997; 1998). A central concept in Freire's analysis of the dominant educational system is that of "banking". In "banking education" teachers are the depositors making deposits of knowledge into students – the depositories. In this approach students' actions are limited to the passive receiving and storing of deposits (Freire, 1981).

In contrast to banking, Freire then proposed a paradigm of critical pedagogy. Essentially Freire's critical pedagogy comprised a dialogical model of teaching and learning whereby learners come to critically understand their personal realities within wider social, economic, political and cultural contexts/structures. From this critical awareness, learners recognise the transformative character of reality and that their own transformative actions are humanising and revolutionary against oppressive elements of reality.

It is important to keep in mind that Freire's ideas were developed in a particular historical and political context of neocolonialism and imperialism in a developing country influenced by radical Christian thinking. Therefore, his pedagogy may not be immediately and successfully transferable to a different setting. While critical pedagogy is evolving it provides a pedagogy based on a set of principles, which are applicable to any teaching/learning situation. It makes no pretence of providing a predetermined "bag of tricks" (Giroux, 1988) that work since not all "classrooms" are the same (Shrewbury, 1987).

Especially since Freire's arrival in the US after his exile in Brazil his ideas have been integrated into the theorising of a growing community of North educators including Shor (1987), McLaren (1989), Arnowitz & Giroux (1985, 1991); Giroux (1983, 1988, 1989, 1991, 1992, 1994, 1996, 1997); Giroux & McLaren (1994); Kincheloe & Steinberg (1998); Luke (1996); and Simon (1987). They have shown how critical pedagogy has relevance also for education in North industrialised contexts. From nonformal educational sites to formal schooling, Freirian principles have been shown to be applicable to the problem of educational transformation.

Freire's work has not been without criticisms, some of which are mentioned here. These criticisms contribute to a further development of CFP. Firstly, Freire has been criticised for using sexist language particularly in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1970). For example, hooks (1993) declares:

> There is never a moment when reading Freire that I have not remained aware of not only the sexist language but the way he… constructs a phallocentric paradigm of liberation wherein freedom and the experience of patriarchal manhood are always linked as though they are one and the same. For me this is always a source of anguish for it represents a blind spot in the vision of men who have profound insight.

Although Freire agrees with the criticisms of sexist language and apologises for it in *Pedagogy of Hope* (1997) by saying,

> Discrimination against women, expressed and committed by sexist discourse, and enfleshed in concrete practices, is a colonial way of treating them, and therefore incompatible with any progressive position, regardless of whether the person taking the position be a woman or a man. (p. 67)

He is inconsistent by refusing to apply this dictum to the rest of his discourse, particularly as he "does not leave room for the inclusion of popular discourse within the text of his pedagogy…thereby limiting his text to a specific audience" (Hendriks, 2002:3).

Another major criticism of Freire's work is that he placed too much emphasis on the class struggle and failed to acknowledge the fact that experiences of struggles within classes are inevitably gendered differently (cf. Brady, 1994; McClafferty, 2002). In *Pedagogy of Hope* (1997) Freire recognises the interconnected relationship between racial, gender and class discrimination, but he insists that classism is the dominant form of discrimination, thereby ignoring the "multifaceted and contradictory nature of differential power relationships in terms of gender, class or any other social category (Coben, 1998:97).

Given the central theme of gender in this study of women ODWs and its interactions with other realities based on class, race, and ethnicity it was clear from the outset therefore that critical pedagogy per se would not be an adequate analytical and conceptual framework for this study. Rather it was necessary to consider an integration of critical pedagogy with critical feminist insights.

Like critical pedagogy, feminist pedagogy is transformative and revolutionary (Shrewbury, 1987). The influences feminist pedagogy has had on a critical feminist pedagogy are the concepts of empowerment, community, and leadership. It embodies a concept of power as energy capacity and potential rather than domination (Shrewbury, 1987). Power is creative community energy - the glue that holds communities together, which provides people the opportunity to make change for the benefit of everyone (Lane, 1983). Everyone needs power to maintain a sense of self and to accomplish ends (Janeway, 1980). Therefore, to be empowered means we recognise we have the ability to create a more humane social order, we can engage in significant learning and we can connect with others in mutually productive ways. The classroom is a "community of learners," where the feminist teacher helps the students develop both a sense of relationship and connectedness with each other, as well as autonomy and individuality. The teacher also helps students develop leadership skills, which provides them the "active mechanism for achieving the empowered community and for that community to be effective within the broader world" (Shrewbury, 1987: 10-11).

From a feminist perspective, Weiler (1991) offers some helpful criticisms of Freire's work and suggests ways to enhance a critical pedagogy. First of all, Weiler attacks Freire's assumption that there is a universal experience. Freire assumes that all oppressed people act uniformly: They perceive the world in the same way, they experience oppression in the same way, they define "humanisation" in the same way, and their goal is to move toward true humanity in the same way. Freire fails to acknowledge that the goal of humanisation has different meanings for different groups of people and there are deeper contradictions and tensions in oppression, which often overlap – for example, although a peasant worker may be oppressed by his boss, the worker may at the same time be oppressing his wife. In addition, Freire does not take into consideration the fact that the oppressed people's "reading of the world" may take place from different positions and result in different truths so there may not be a collective move toward their own humanisation and transforming the world. Finally, Weiler points out that although Freire acknowledges the differential in power held by the teacher over students by virtue of the teacher's greater experience and knowledge and the hierarchical structure of institutions within which the teacher teaches, he fails to consider other forms of power (by virtue of his/her class, race or gender) that may lead to antagonisms. With different histories and interests and differing kinds of knowledge and power there are bound to be conflicts among students and teachers.

Drawing on "post modern" insights, other feminists like Ellsworth (1989) and Lather (1991) have also critiqued some critical pedagogy advocates for assuming that "transformative" educators have "privileged knowledge free of false logic and beliefs". When critical pedagogues take on an uncritical role as "masters of truth and justice" leading learners from "false consciousness" toward "liberation" then the teacher-learner relationship will remain authoritarian. As Lather (1991: 143) asked, "To what extent is the pedagogy we construct in the name of liberation intrusive, invasive, pressured?"

A further emphasis feminist theorists have raised which enriches Freire's critical pedagogy is on the importance of difference. The assumption that the category "women" is a single, universal, unitary one has been challenged (cf. bell hooks, 1989; Diane Fuss, 1989; and Deborah Britzman, 1992). And this in turn has brought into question the authority of women as teachers and students as Culley and Portuges (1985: 12) remind us: "The facts of class, of race, of ethnicity, of sexual preference – as well as gender- may cut across the neat divisions of teacher/student." Unlike the teacher Freire talks about, feminist teachers are aware of power of their various subject positions and they acknowledge "the realities of conflict and tensions based on contradictory political goals, as well as the meaning of historically experienced oppression for both teachers and students" (Weiler, 1998: 132). This awareness leads to a pedagogy, which respects difference for both teachers and students.

Like Freirean pedagogy, feminist theorists too believe that through reflection on their experiences the oppressed come to an understanding of their role as "knowers of the word and the world", which will lead to social transformation. However, as stated above, unlike Freire, feminist theorists do not assume there is a common experience for all oppressed peoples, nor for all women. For example, hooks (1981) clearly expresses her dissatisfaction with the assumption that white, middle class North American women were synonymous with the word woman, thereby dehumanising and erasing the experiences of most women (all the "Others" who were perceived as different). Within the ODW phenomenon, this means that we acknowledge that there are differences between women, i.e. "some women hold power (and exercise it) over other women (and men)" and "these differences are extremely complex (though immigration and citizenship legislation do a lot to simplify them)" (Anderson, 2000: 6). And we acknowledge that not all ODWs experience power relationships in the same way. Because although the employers of ODWs hold both the personalistic idiom of power[4] and the materialistic idiom of power[5] over their ODWs, ODWs' experiences are obviously not the same. To assume that all ODWs experience slave-like violent work conditions erases all the experiences of those who do not and it ignores the ODWs' different psychobiographies, e.g. their abilities to personally assert themselves to improve their circumstances to some extent (Anderson, 2000).

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[4] Where person dependencies are created and an attempt is made to humanise power relationships through social practices such as gift giving.

[5] Where relations of dependencies are concealed and "the power relationship is depicted as power over commodities rather than power over persons" (Anderson, 2000: 6).

Although stress is put on experience as well as feelings, even these are problematised. Thompson (1978) points out:

> Experience – a category which, however imperfect it may be, is indispensable to the historian, since it comprises the mental and emotional response, whether of an individual or of a social group, to many inter-related events or to many repetitions of the same kind of event... experience is valid and effective but within determined limits: the farmer must 'knows' his seasons, the sailor 'knows' his seas, but both may remain mystified about kingship and cosmology. (cited in O'Connell Davidson, 1998: 115).

Hence personal narratives of lived experience are shared while at the same time the role of social and historical practices are collectively examined (Fuss, 1989) and the workings of hegemonic ideologies in their own subjectivities are uncovered (Haug, 1987).[6]

Furthermore, feminist theorists also accentuate the need to go further with Freire's "reading of the world", by exploring and uncovering the overlapping and interlocking multiple forms of oppression.

There are many different perspectives in feminist pedagogy. One of which is that taken by women of colour and women of the South. It is this perspective that critical pedagogy fails to address and which further contributes to a feminist critical pedagogy.

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[6] Drawing on examples from their university classroom teaching Bell, Morrow and Tastsoglou (1999) illustrate that attempting to have students deconstruct, politicise, and contextualise their experiences theoretically and think critically are difficult goals. Their students' resistance to critical feminist, anti-racist pedagogy was caused by racism, classism, homophobia and sexism. Their negative reactions were predictable: They felt angry because of the little space provided for them to assert their subjectivities; confused by being asked to challenge authoritative scholars and by the multiple ways issues could be understood; suspicious of the instructors' age, experience, gender and place of birth; and distrustful of what they perceived as instructors' reimposition of the banking system of education. The authors suggest strategies such as establishing a "working assumption" as well as guidelines for discussions in the beginning of class, having each student present his/her analysis of his/her own experiences, and asking students to discuss in class and in journals which knowledge claims they accept and reject and why.

### (i). A critical feminist pedagogy for migrant women workers

A truly democratic education that critical feminist pedagogy provides has the power to transform society and prepare migrant women to organise and struggle for equal political power. Critical feminist pedagogy requires a continuous quest for social transformation requiring an understanding of societies provided by critical reason in order to challenge hegemony, which attempts to place beyond question the existing inequalities they are experiencing.

In a critical feminist pedagogy, migrant domestic workers develop an understanding of how the social construction of knowledge determines what people believe is true and how their surroundings are interpreted (Giroux as cited in Spring, 1994). This understanding includes:

> …the task of identifying the ways in which individuals construct themselves into existing structures, and are thereby themselves formed; the way in which they reconstruct social structures; the points at which change is possible, the points where our chains chafe us most, the point where accommodations have been made. (Haug, 1987: 41)

Global capitalism is one such system, which chafes migrant women the most. It has given rise to the exploitative and oppressive conditions, which many women around the world are experiencing. As global capitalism has expanded since the 1980s, the lack of an ethical foundation has never been so apparent (Giroux, 1999). It is "a system without a soul, without humanity" (Parenti, 1998). It has no loyalty to democracy, to any nation, and no dedication to 'serving the community'. It is loyal only to its own system of capitalist accumulation, it serves only itself extracting all it can from the masses so that it might give to the very few (Parenti, 1998).

A critical feminist pedagogy attempts to open institutional spaces for marginalised migrant workers' diversity of voices to be heard. They will include those who take on the challenge of developing a critical analysis of oppressive, taken for granted social systems in order to transform them. Through dialogue and sharing of experiences, global capitalism – one of many taken-for-granted social systems is critically analysed.

Global capitalism requires and works to create a division of labour under which a majority of people on the globe is subject to and controlled by a minority – a class who privately own the means of production. Divisions among workers based on ideological differences and socially constructed differences such as race and gender break down opportunities for solidarity and "naturalize" the super-exploitation of certain sectors of the working class (Cotter, 2000). The division of labour has never been so international as it is now (Moody, 1997). As capitalists become increasingly mobile – moving their production sites from the "First World" to the "Third World" where cheap labour markets and weak unions enable exploitation of the working class they ensure profitability for themselves. Neo-liberal policies of privatisation, deregulation and free-marketisation have further accommodated global capitalism's economic shifts (Giroux, 1999). In these "Third World" production sites capital makes use of differences to pull together a super-exploitative work force made up mostly of poor, young women of colour. The mobility of capital means the capitalist class cannot only locate a super-exploitative work force but can create the conditions necessary for the production of this sector of the work-force (Cotter, 2000).

Thirty years after Freire's identification of the "banking" style of education, it still imbues the dominant educational systems in both North and South contexts. The highest mission of education is to train students to take their places at different levels in the corporate order (Aronowitz, 1998). As nation states orient their economies towards a globalised market, education is upheld as the tool for producing human capital or resources required for competitive globalisation from above.

The "banking" style of education sets the teacher up as the authoritarian all-knower, resists dialogue, inhibits creativity, and fails to acknowledge people as historical beings (Freire 1981). In contrast, a Freirean world-view argues for education for liberation, whereby "learners" and "teachers" relate non-hierarchically and dialogically to gain critical awareness of realities and individual and collective action to transform oppressive conditions. In Freirean problem-posing education, students are critical co-investigators in dialogue with the teacher. Moreover, the curricula being flexible and relevant to students' lives, provide attitudes, skills and values for people-oriented development. Freire's education for liberation involves the creation of environments for the active and courageous exercise of people power and non-violent resistance against exploitative and abusive relationships and structures. In recent decades, Freirean perspectives on education have been integrated into the project of critical consciousness in a project of critical pedagogy.

Freire (1985) advises that a domesticated consciousness will not be averted unless the non-formal educators (teacher and learner alike) are regarded as intellectuals who can create and re-create knowledge. Non-formal education methods of teaching "have to be tied to a philosophy of education which places its trust in people as co-creators of reality/knowledge" (Freire 1985, p.140). The educator is considered a facilitator of a collective educational process, "someone who is able to question critically different perceptions of reality and custom, and to contribute to the formulation of new knowledge that addresses the problems of communities and the actions those communities want to undertake" (Magendzo, 1990, cited in Bannerji, 1993, p. 50). An educator who assumes that the "students" have a false consciousness and that s/he, the "teacher" knows what is good for them without previously consulting them puts the educator in a position of authority and adopts a vertical approach . (McKay & Romm, 1992) disrupting the attempt to educate for liberation.

Essentially, the educator in an NGO for migrant workers, who is also likely an ex-ODW must, as feminist theorists have warned, acknowledged the power of her various subject positions and recognise differences. The recognition of differences among women Weiler (1998) cautions raises serious challenges "by calling into question the authority of the teacher/theorist[7], raising feelings of guilt and shame, and revealing tensions among students as well as between teacher and students" (139). Yet to deny differences and conflicts leaves unexplored the overlapping forms of oppression migrant workers experience and glosses over the complex realisation of Freire's concept of a collective conscientization and fight for liberation. Recognising differences and conflicts are not without risk nor is it a painless exercise but it is necessary in order for migrant workers to build coalitions around common goals.

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[7] Shrewsbury (1987:9) suggests that an empowering pedagogy does not "dissolve the authority of power of the instructor [but] it does move from power as domination to power as creative energy".

The educator must assist the "students" (migrant workers) to reflect on the manner in which values, beliefs, and behaviours, previously deemed unchallengeable, can be critically analysed through dialogue and group learning, whilst valuing the participants' experiences and emotions. Through these interactions, the educator presents alternative ways of interpreting and creating a world to migrant workers and fosters a willingness to consider alternative ways of living (Brookfield, 1985).

### (ii). Nongovernment Organisations (NGOs) for Migrant workers

Pedagogy for empowerment based on the methods of Freire, is not a new thing to developing countries. Indeed, Freire developed it in a Third World setting – Brazil, and later in Chile and Guinea-Bissau. Claude (1996) also reminds us that it is best known and used with exemplary results in various developing countries of the South. He states:

> Freire's techniques have been adapted for use as empowerment pedagogies in other Third World settings most prominently in Asia where [researchers] have linked human rights education for empowerment to allied economic, political and legal development objectives (Claude, 1996, p. 201).

Philippine NGOs have a very active history, particularly during the Marcos regime fighting for peace, justice, and compassion. The prodigious migrant NGOs around the Philippines are excellent places to educate migrant women for transformation in a non-formal setting. In a global economy, women have begun to express solidarity for each other's struggles by forming a world- wide movement to protect women from economic exploitation and to gain political rights and ensure their human rights are safeguarded. Despite their complex and contradiction-filled realities, the world women's conferences are clearly powerful and empowering symbols and strategies for a collective women's struggle against marginalisation and injustice. Some NGOs recognise the importance of solidarity on a global basis and have forged links nationally and regionally, specifically at the Asia-Pacific level.

Migrant NGOs can apply critical feminist pedagogical approaches to the present circumstances of migrant women workers and attempt to understand the root causes of why women migrate and why they are positioned where they are in the societies of both sending and receiving countries. Some NGOs are doing this already as will be discussed in chapter seven. Migrant domestic workers are challenged to question the previously unquestioned givens, such as: the development programs in their countries which impel them to migrate; the temporary work visas and insecure status they are given in the receiving countries; and the obligation felt by female family members in particular to migrate and send back their salaries to help their families. Posing questions about justice and human rights and considering possibilities for transcending traditionally accepted patterns of oppression provides the optimism and the means for social transformation.

NGOs provide the spaces and places where migrant domestic workers can begin, or continue on, their educational journey to liberation. Unlike an institutional setting where teacher authority is structurally "built in" making the achievement of a collective and non-hierarchical vision difficult, the problem of teacher authority is reduced in an NGO setting. However, in order for NGOs to be truly effective, they must be ever vigilant in their self-reflection to ensure that their objectives and goals keep pace with political and social changes, and that their pedagogical paradigms are horizontal, participatory and democratic.

# Chapter 3: Research methodology

## Introduction: The Qualitative Research Paradigm

In recent years there has been a growing interest in qualitative research methodology in contrast with the earlier dominance of quantitative research methods in the social sciences, including education. Indeed Gilbert (2001:3) asserts that it was only a short time ago that qualitative research methods within traditional fields of psychology and sociology were met with suspicion and contempt, and although this view persists, many recognise the value of qualitative research methods for the examination of social and psychological phenomena.

For my study of the attitudes and experiences of Filipino migrant workers working abroad as domestic workers and the role that education plays in their life experiences, I relied on qualitative methods of data collection and analysis. A qualitative research paradigm allows us to know people personally and to see them as they are developing their own definitions of the world. Research participants are considered active subjects who negotiate and interpret their realities through interactions with others and their social environments (Neuman, 1991). Merriam (1998) states that qualitative research is concerned with drawing out people's understandings of the world, how they make sense of the world and the experiences they have in the world. As Bogdan & Taylor (1975) noted:

> ...Qualitative methods enable us to explore concepts whose essence is lost in other research approaches. Such concepts as beauty, pain, faith, suffering, frustration, hope and love can be studied as they are defined and experienced by real people in their everyday lives. (Bogdan & Taylor 1975:4-5)

The paradigm holds that through negotiation and interpretation, people develop patterns of interaction; they do not have a fixed pattern of responses to new situations. Therefore, qualitative research focuses on the participant's viewpoint so to understand interaction, process and social change (Filstead 1970). Hence, qualitative research can be more sensitive to cultural and intercultural issues and processes, and is the most appropriate research approach for this study because it requires the participants to share their own perceptions within their own unique cultural surroundings. Through in-depth interviewing for example the researcher comes to understand the participants' perceptions, feelings, and knowledge.

Other methods such as participant observation, focus groups, ethnography, and case study are also aimed at understanding "experience as it is 'lived' or 'felt' or 'undergone'" (Sherman & Webb, 1988: 7).

Qualitative designs are naturalistic in that the researcher does not attempt to alter or manipulate the setting in any way because the objective of the qualitative methods is to understand naturally occurring phenomena in their naturally occurring states (Patton, 1990). There can be no predetermined constraints on outcomes.

Unlike the researcher using quantitative methods, I as a qualitative researcher had to get to know my participants at a personal level. It was not imperative that I remain cool, detached and external. Certainly to behave in such a manner would have limited my understanding and I would have been interpreted as being cold and callous, which would likely have closed down the interview before it even started. Patton (1990: 47) supports this by stating:

> … qualitative evaluators question the necessity and utility of distance and detachment, assuming that without empathy and sympathetic introspection derived from personal encounters the observer cannot fully understand human behaviour. Understanding comes from trying to put oneself in the other person's shoes, from trying to discern how others think, act, and feel.

As qualitative research often focuses on the understanding and exploration of emotionally laden human phenomenon, researchers must attempt to enter the subjective world of the participants and report on emotional as well as cognitive aspects of the lives of those studied (Gilbert, 2001). Gilbert (2001) asserts that this requires "empathy, the ability to connect at a feeling and thinking level with the study participants" along with the researchers' "rational understanding while they reach within themselves for their subjective views and personal experiences, looking for comparability of experience." (p. 11).

Personal experiences and empathetic insights are an important part of the inquiry and critical to understanding the phenomenon. The researcher includes these as part of the relevant data, while taking a neutral non-judgemental stance toward whatever content may emerge. On this point Patton (1990: 58) reminds us that neutrality "can facilitate rapport and help build a relationship that supports empathy by disciplining the researcher to be non-judgemental and open."

Gilbert (2001) further adds to this discussion by stressing the need to find a balance of emotional engagement. She warns:

> Unless the researcher is self-reflective, a danger exists where the researcher's private affective meanings may cloud understanding of the participants' construction of meaning and eventually complicate the research relationship. At the same time, if researchers distance themselves too much, they run the risk of missing important elements of what they are studying. Thus, they may choose to allow themselves to have certain feelings, but deny or abandon emotions they see as inappropriate to the task at hand. (Gilbert, 2001: 12)

The interviews, "which represent either intimate conversations and correspondence or personal stories and experiences as told to the researcher" (Bogdan & Taylor 1975:7), enabled me to view each participant in relation to her history and to examine how she is influenced by various social, religious, political and economic currents. The individual is an active agent who defines the nature of reality for her/himself and the meaning that it generates through interaction and contacts with objects and people. An individual responds and reacts to the meanings s/he associates with particular objects and people. These meanings are modified and articulated through an interpretative process (Blumer 1969). The interpretative methodology contains the "non-exhaustive subcategories of good research outcomes that explain or create generalisations, develop new concepts, elaborate existing concepts, provide insights that change behaviour, refine knowledge, and identify problems, clarify complexity and develop theory" (Peshkin 1993: 25). This method of inquiry allows a "mixture of scholarship and story that captures lived reality" (Ladson-Billings 1994).

For this study, I also drew on the narrative form of inquiry, which is the study of how human beings experience the world (Connelly & Clandinin 1990). Narratives...

> enhance qualitative research by opening new roots into the social sciences, and perhaps even into people's heads... It is an oppositional strategy of reclamation, emancipation, empowerment, a way of rescuing experience and identity from the abstractions and reductions of bureaucrats, of researchers, of men... for some it is a path to self-understanding and professional development; a search for self-

> knowledge through discovery, reflection or reappraisal. (Cambridge Journal of Education 1990: 203)

For want of a better label, my research falls under what Merriam (1998: 11) calls "Basic or Generic Qualitative Study", which is characterised by the following:

> ...data are collected through interviews, observation or document analysis. Findings are a mix of description and analysis – an analysis that uses concepts from the theoretical framework of study. The analysis usually results in the identification of recurring patterns...that cut through the data or in the delineation of a process. (Merriam, 1998: 11)

Merriam clarifies by comparing to it other types of qualitative studies. Unlike grounded theory studies, the analysis of basic or generic studies does not extend to building a substantive theory. Unlike case studies there is no bounded system or functioning unit that circumscribes the investigation.

**Entry and Data Collection Process**

On January fifth, 1998 I left Edmonton on a freezing dark snowy morning for the Philippines. On January seventh at 1:00 in the morning I disembarked from the plane in hot and humid Manila. After a day of "trying to find my feet" and attempting to cope with the heat, humidity, crowds, noise and air pollution, I went to my host NGO – The Philippines Development Assistance Programme (PDAP). Right away I was welcomed and assisted in getting started on my research. Over the three years prior to my arrival in the Philippines I had established contact with PDAP through their environmental education toy-making event for Filipino and Canadian school children. PDAP is a non-stock, non-profit consortium of Canadian and Philippine NGOs that contributes to social change by creating a favourable development environment. Over the past 14 years, it has partnered with over 500 community-based organisations to reduce the causes of poverty and inequity in the Philippines. PDAP efficiently and effectively manages large Official Development Assistance (ODA)-funded projects for Philippine NGOs and People's Organisations (POs) (PDAP website, 2001). The Canadian Development Assistance Agency (CIDA) is one of the providers of ODA, through its development co-operation program.

For gaining entrée into the field, I used the "known sponsor approach" (Patton, 1990: 254). PDAP helped establish legitimacy and credibility for me. Although PDAP does not have a specific focus on migrant workers it is well known and respected in the Philippines as a coalition of NGOs which funds and operates programmes for people-centred projects working for people's empowerment at the grassroots level. Through PDAP, contacts were made for me with the relevant NGOs by sending faxes of introduction, which included a summary of my research. Meetings with the executive directors were arranged – at least one or two every day for the next few weeks. Also, through indirect contacts with friends of the PDAP staff and a nun I chanced to meet on a jeepney I was able to connect with many other participants. The "snow-balling" effect began. On one day I had over six women willing to be interviewed, and on two occasions 20 or 30 women and men were interested in being interviewed (after being strongly advised to do so by an executive director)[1].

I was assisted by a few new acquaintances about using the jeepney. Using the jeepney as my main mode of transportation forced me to really get to know my way around the city of Manila and become familiar with daily life on the streets. It also exposed me to cultural sights, sounds and smells I may never have experienced had I relied only on taxis. It also gave me great personal confidence and reduced my fears and anxieties about living and travelling in a new city/country. On occasion my volunteer research assistant accompanied me to appointments around Manila, Quezon City, Pasig City and she also came with me to the mountain province. She was present for seven of the twelve ODW participant interviews, one of the government organisation interviews and one of the NGO interviews.

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[1] On one occasion in particular, I recall a whole village showing up for "an interview" with me. The Executive Director of an NGO loaned me a van and driver and sent me off with the NGO secretary to tour various places in Mindanao where this NGO was assisting. After we stopped at the first village, without my knowledge of what was being communicated and without any advance notice a whole community was called to the centre area. Benches were pulled out and in short order perhaps 50 men and women and a few babies and toddlers sat around a circle looking at me expectantly. I was quite unprepared for this and felt dismayed and embarrassed. The NGO secretary demanded and received attention immediately (she was in a position of power in a sense as she was the one to collect debts and monies, which would then be loaned out to others). She must have introduced me and said something to the effect that I am Canadian and I am interested in learning something from them about working overseas. I felt I had to make an attempt to show interest in each and every person who had given up their time and activities to come see me so I took out my tape recorder and went round the whole group and asked a few brief questions. I think the villagers assumed I was recruiting workers for working in Canada even though I stated I was not. Mostly people in the group listened attentively to the person speaking and there were a few laughs at their answers, but I am sure the whole "interview" was becoming boring and redundant for everyone of us.

My research assistant had been an overseas contract worker who worked as a nurse in Saudi Arabia for nine years. She had insight into the culture of Saudi Arabia, where some of the participants had lived and worked. As a Filipino she had an understanding and knowledge of Filipino culture and lifestyle in both rural and urban areas, and of the Filipino language (the national language). She was respectful of the participants' accounts of their experiences and occasionally encouraged further with a nod of her head or a brief expression of interest or a question. She did not attempt to direct or lead the interviews, nor did she make any written notes. Her knowledge and participation in this research were assets.

The role of the research assistant was primarily to assist in translation when necessary, make mental notes/observations[2] during the interviews to share with me afterwards, and help with travel and accommodation arrangements. In our introductions to the interviewees it was made clear that she was there to help with any language problems and that she, like me, would maintain their anonymity and keep their interviews confidential. It is my observation that her presence during the interviews did not have any negative effects on our interactions, especially in the interviews where translation was required because of her friendly personality and expressions of interest. Furthermore, her nationality and language skills may have helped put participants at ease. However, it is also possible that participants may have been made uncomfortable by the fact that there were two of us and perhaps more reluctant to share private thoughts, stories and fears due to the presence of another Filipino woman. The characteristics and circumstances of the research assistant such as being single, childless, in early forties, Catholic, Visayan, and a nurse may have helped or hindered the interview, but I have no way of measuring that.

As earlier noted, contacts made with relevant NGOs in the Philippines enabled me to meet with a group of Filipino domestic workers who had returned from employment in overseas countries and who were willing to explore and analyse the role education has played and can play in influencing their lives before, during and after the ODW experience. Interviews (individual and small groups) and content analysis of relevant documents (e.g. policy statements, domestic worker handbooks and personal contracts) were specific methods used to gather the required data. The Philippines Development Assistance Program (PDAP) with which I had maintained contact over the previous three years in their environmental toy event, assisted me in making links with key NGOs involved in the ODW phenomenon. These included thirteen of the most prominent NGOs (listed below). I met with executive directors and staff of the non-government organisations to gain a critical understanding of their role and involvement in the lives of ODWs. Together, the returned ODW participants in my study, and NGO workers and myself explored possibilities for enrichment of the education programmes of the NGOs. I also interviewed one administrator from the Philippines Overseas Employment Agency (POEA) and two from Overseas Workers' Welfare Administration (OWWA) to get additional perspectives of Overseas Domestic Work from the Philippine government. One concerned Legislator in Congress was also interviewed to gain insight into government procedures and programmes in the ODW context.

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[2] Specifically when she used Filipino with the participants she may have been able to pick up nuances and shades of meaning of what was being conveyed from a cultural context.

## Purposive Sampling

For this study I met with four groups of people - (a) returned migrant domestic workers, (b) NGO workers (c) government officials working in the Philippines Overseas Employment Agency (POEA) and the OWWA (Overseas Workers' Welfare Administration)[3] and (d) a Legislator in Congress.

(a). A sample of 12 women for this study was drawn from a population of female migrant workers with Filipino citizenship currently residing in villages and towns in the provinces of Northern Luzon and Mindanao in the Philippines. Potential participants were suggested to me by non-government organisation workers. The NGO workers explained the purpose of my study to the women who fit the criteria and asked if they would be willing to meet me and hear more about the study. After being introduced to each woman I again explained the purpose of my study and clarified their role and rights as participants. If they fit the criteria and they agreed to be interviewed they were selected to participate.

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[3] The POEA along with the OWWA (Overseas Workers' Welfare Administration) was set up in the 1980s to administer and regulate labour export, to ensure the steady and orderly outflow of Filipino overseas contract workers and to protect them from abuses of local recruiters and foreign employers.

The main criteria were that the women had worked as domestic workers (either as a nanny who looks after children in a private home, a maid who does housekeeping duties or as a live-in caregiver, who lives in a private home and tends to the elderly, the sick or disabled) in a country other than the Philippines in the last seven years for a duration of at least one year. The rationale for these time limitations was so that the women's experiences were still relatively fresh in memory and in order to make comparisons with other women's experiences, the experiences had to have been in a similar historical time-frame. Also, I felt that a year would allow for the women to have had sufficient time to "adapt" to the new environment, job and employer-family and be able to articulate their feelings and experiences more objectively. Furthermore, the women must have been back in the Philippines for at least a year but no longer than seven years so that they would have had experiences of reintegration in Philippines' economy, culture, society and educational processes. Seven years ensured that the memory recall time was not too long. Other criteria included, as already stated, that the sample be women and Filipino nationals and that they had completed at least secondary schooling.

The purposive sample included women with a variety of characteristics related to age and family status. Participants were old and young, married, single, divorced or widowed, mothers, guardians of children, aunts, sisters, and grandmothers. They reflected a cross-section of women of various ethnic and class backgrounds and included women who had worked in countries of the Middle Eastern region (such as Saudi Arabia, Kuwait or Brunei), or other Asian countries (such as Singapore, Hong Kong or Malaysia). Because few women who go to North America or Europe return to the Philippines as they often become landed immigrants and stay on, they were difficult to locate and therefore not included in this sample.

(b). The executive directors of thirteen of the larger NGOs, which administer to overseas contract/migrant female workers, were interviewed. These included: Centre for Overseas Workers (COW) in Quezon City and in Davao, Mindanao; Centre for Women's Resources (CWR); Gabriela Commission on Overseas Filipinas; Kaibigan –Friends of Filipino Migrant Workers, Inc.; Kanlungan Centre Foundation Inc. in Quezon City and in San Fernando, La Union; Migrante – Alliance for Migrant Concerns; Philippine Migrants Right Watch; Scalabrini Centre for People on the Move; Scalibrini Migration Centre (SMC); Sentro Ng Manggagawang Pilipina; Third World Movement Against the Exploitation of Women; and Unlad Kabayan Migrant Services Foundation, and Kakammpi. I interviewed a total of eighteen people from these organisations. All of these executive directors, and NGO workers were knowledgeable and familiar with overseas contract/migrant female workers, and have been working closely with domestic workers.

(c). Three administrators from the two key overseas contract workers' government agencies -the POEA[4] and the OWWA[5] were interviewed.

(d). My final interview was with one legislator in congress who has a commitment to Overseas Migrant Workers and ODWs. This Congressman has an insight into government procedures and programmes and has undertaken advocacy activities in congress on behalf of ODWs and overseas migrant workers in general.

To conduct interviews with ODWs and NGO workers, I travelled extensively around the country by all manner of transport. For example I went by bus to San Fernando, Pugo, Agoo and Baguio in North Luzon; by plane to Davao City, Mindanao; by bus to Malaybalay and Cagayan de Oro; by ferry to Camiguin Island in North Mindanao; and by plane back to Manila. Then I departed by plane for Iloilo, Panay, Visayas region, travelled by outrigger boat to Guimaras Island, returned to Iloilo by small ferry boat, departed for Cebu City on a 12 hour (overnight) Trans-Asian Ferry ride, and by jet-speedboat to Bohol and Panglao Island.

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[4] Executive Order 797 created the POEA to streamline and adopt a comprehensive and systematic scheme for overseas employment promotion, set standards for wages and work conditions for overseas work, enforce joint and solidarity liability with local agencies and foreign employers (Vasquez et al 1995:14).

[5] The OWWA was created by a presidential Letter of Instruction (LOI) No. 537 and Presidential Decrees 1894 and 1809 to protect the interest and promote the well-being of Filipino overseas contract workers and their families and provide social and welfare services to them as well (Vasquez et al 1995:14).

In addition to my five-month field experience in the Philippines I had the opportunity to travel to Hong Kong where I stayed one week at a women's shelter for domestic workers, which provided me rich data that enhanced the research conducted for this study. During that time I was able to interview thirteen more women staying at the shelter. I also visited other NGOs: United Filipinos In Hong Kong (Unifil), Asia Pacific Mission for Migrant Filipinos (APMMF), Tulay Ng Tagumpay (TNT), Helpers for Domestic Helpers, and Asian Migrant Centre (AMC) where I interviewed the executive directors, workers and informally met some of the ODWs. I attended a prayer meeting, where I interviewed four more women and the pastor who heads the NGO; a rally; a meeting of ODWs and the Consulate and OWWA officials. I met with two OWWA official at the Philippine Consulate where I witnessed a conference between a dissatisfied ODW and a disgruntled employer couple. On Saturday night I went with two women NGO workers to strip clubs where predominantly Filipino overseas "entertainers" were working. The NGO workers quickly and matter-of-factly gave health advice to the strippers and prostitutes on the proper use of condoms and information about AIDS and HIV as the club owners looked on suspiciously. On Sunday I spent the day in the park with ODWs on their day off to witness the enormous gathering of thousands of ODWs enjoying their one day a week off.

After conducting a few interviews with women who were to be the "core" sample I immediately realised I had to omit them as participants in the study, even though they had expressed their interest and enthusiasm for being a part of the study and they had met the criteria outlined above. For example, one woman who had been raped by the employer's adult son and was nine month pregnant when I interviewed her was emotionally overwrought and her tears often ended a relevant course of conversation and as interviewer I became too reluctant to ask important questions in case it further upset her. On another occasion I realised that the NGO counsellor's presence (the counsellor was asked by the participant to stay through the interview) was impinging on the progress of the interview as the counsellor would occasionally interject a comment that would lead the questioning on a different tangent or to an answer that I did not think the participant was initially going to give. Similarly, one interview was conducted within earshot of a nun (who was the interviewee's employer) and the interviewee would sometimes drop her voice to a whisper (which was inaudible to me as well as the nun) or she would answer and then giggle loudly while looking at the nun as if to send a message that she might not be giving a complete answer or maybe that her response was not to be taken seriously. One interviewee who called me "Sister" throughout the interview thought all along that I was a nun until the very end of the interview when I mentioned my husband and she responded with surprise "You're married already?" I had thought that the term "sister" was just a friendly address of camaraderie for someone within the NGO environment. I presume the woman's responses to interview questions were probably influenced by her belief that I was someone dedicated to a religious order. One participant who I did not intend to include because she did not fit the criteria (she was an entertainer not an ODW) was interviewed simply because she really wanted to share her views.

### Data collection

Data collection covered a period of five months starting in January 1998. The data collection included interviews, focus group discussions and document analysis.

### (a). Interviews

As this research required access to people's ideas, thoughts, and memories in their own words, a non-hierarchical, sharing approach was necessary to avoid "alienation of the researcher from the researched" (James, 1986:20).

"Semi-structured or unstructured interviewing… is a qualitative data-gathering technique" (Reinharz 1992:18). To effectively address the questions raised in this study, I employed in-depth personal interviews, which were semi-structured. The interview is the most appropriate method to use for the purpose of obtaining subjective data in the realm of values, attitudes and social perceptions (Skager & Weinberg 1971). Personal perspectives, feelings, and suggestions are best explained through descriptive language. Furthermore, as

Raymond (1979:16) noted, the unstructured [or semi-structured] research interview, which uses open-ended questions, maximises discovery and description. Therefore, to understand the experiences and influence of education for domestic workers, individual, open-ended questioning was most appropriate for this study.

In their research, Aisenberg & Harrington (1988:x) felt that as "we do not know at the outset what the particularities of each woman's relevant experience would be, we did not conduct the interviews through preset questions". I too believe that too many fixed and preset questions would have structured the interviews too much and stifled free thought and dialogue. Therefore, I had prepared a guide for the interview (see appendix) which allowed the interview to focus on the particular topics and general areas to be covered, but allowed the interviewees to determine the order of topics, the time spent on each, and the introduction of additional issues of migration, domestic work, etc. Patton (1980) adds that by using an interview guide, the researcher remains free to build a conversation within a particular subject area, to word the questions spontaneously and to establish a conversational style.

All interviews were conducted in English, a language nearly all participants were comfortable using, although for two participants who were not, my research assistant provided translation. The interviews lasted between two to four hours each, and for the domestic workers group of participants I followed up with a second interview of approximately one hour wherever possible. A follow-up interview gave participants a chance to hear the researcher's interpretation, "read her transcript (if already completed), clarify, correct or add anything" (Kelly 1988:12). If it was not possible to meet for this interview I sent the transcript back to the participant by mail with additional notes and questions. I also highlighted statements, which needed further clarification and asked for elaboration. A return stamped addressed envelope was enclosed. All of the transcripts I sent out were returned with written responses to the questions. For one participant who was preparing to leave the country within a few days after I had interviewed her, I followed up with a telephone call. I read the transcript over the phone to her, stopping to ask for further clarification or being stopped by her when she wanted to add something. At this final stage the participants were given opportunity to have the data I collected withdrawn if they felt they did not want to continue their participation in the research. None did.

The interviews were audio-tape recorded with the permission of the participants. By audio-taping the interviews the emotions expressed in the interviewees' voices, as well as pauses, exclamations, and relevant background sounds were captured.

As soon as possible after each interview I made further notes of my observations, perceptions, and personal feelings and transcribed the audio-tapes on my laptop computer. By transcribing in the field I could ensure the accuracy of chronicling what was said and how it was said by drawing on memory whenever the audio-tape failed to pick up words clearly. I could also begin analysis immediately rather than waiting until all my data were collected.

### (b). Document analysis

The government documents that were analysed contributed to the historical background of the migration patterns of overseas domestic workers, and provided descriptive statistical data of female Filipino migration. These documents included records of court cases involving migrant domestic workers, declarations, international covenants, United Nations conventions, human rights protections, labour legislation and recommendations.

NGO documentation pertaining to migrant domestic workers was also analysed. These documents included goals and activities of the NGO, its policies, declarations, agendas and responsibilities, conference proceedings, reports, newsletters, magazines, and other literature provided to migrant workers, their families and the general public, as well as newspaper clippings of past and present (court) cases involving migrant workers, and photograph albums.

By critically reading and historically analysing these prodigious documents – some of which I did while in the field and others afterwards, I was provided vital background information I did not/could not garner from the interviews. I was also prompted to examine, sometimes re-examine and add to the themes I had been using in the interviews. Furthermore, doing document analysis is one way of triangulating the data. Denzin & Lincoln (1994) declare that documents help to verify accuracy of statements made about the past in order to establish relationships and determine the direction of cause and effect relationships.

### (c). Journal writing

Peshkin (1988) counsels that for the researcher subjectivity is inevitable. Denzin (1989) adds value-free interpretation is impossible, but to reduce effects such as clouding and misunderstanding on subsequent interpretations, it is important for the researcher to clarify preconceptions, values and interpretations about the problem being studied. Alvesson & Sköldberg's (2000) discussion on emotion in research is a useful one. They assert that emotion is a vital element throughout the research process because it plays a part in persons' thinking, attitudes they adopt on certain research issues, and in specific observations they make. They elaborate:

> Emotion is an inevitable and important part of the researcher's motivation and choice of orientation, and of the specific way in which the topic studied is handled. The research process should be explicitly guided by individual researchers' willingness to reflect on and listen to their own feelings. At the same time, serious attention should be paid to the emotions of the subjects studied, regardless of what is being researched. (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2000: 217)

It follows then that self-reflection and critical self-analysis of feelings are an important part of the research process, particularly in qualitative research. Gilbert (2001) declares that it is essential for researchers to maintain a reflexive stance otherwise emotions may result in a lack of clarity or "fuzziness" in boundaries.

> These boundaries must be negotiated and renegotiated, an on-going part of the research process, as a balance is sought between the dangers and benefits of being too far in or too far out of the lives of the researched. (Gilbert, 2001: 12)

Hence, at the outset it was vital that I was forthright and clear about my stand-point, preconceptions, values and interpretations, which may have affected the data collection, analysis and interpretation. These I recorded along with my personal experiences and empathetic insights in a journal. Keeping a private journal provided me the opportunity and place to be self-reflective and critically self-analyse my emotions. Both Ely (1991) and Rowling (1999) support the idea of journaling to monitor personal responses to the research activity.

By journaling I became aware of my reactions, of abashment and discomfort for example, with the participants' religious statements such as "It's not up to me [what I do], it's up to God", "I don't need to worry [about the dangers I may face] because I put my faith in the Lord", or to traditional declarations such as, "Good women don't get raped". By keeping an account of my personal reflections I became aware of changes which occurred in myself. My "tall nose" and my curly hair, (which people commented on), my height (which although only 5'7'' made me feel like I was towering over many people), my skin tone (which is "tanned" or "olive", but in the Philippines it was considered "white"), and my clothing (which always appeared rumpled because of the heat and humidity) were some examples of how I perceived my appearance differently in this new context, which made me more self-conscious at first and possibly affected the way I conducted my first few interviews. Over time, I became more comfortable in my surroundings, more confident in conducting interviews, and more empathetic toward my participants as I began to "see" more of their lives through their eyes. Denzin (1978: 200) asserts that changes will inevitably occur in the researcher and it is important to record these because, "to be insensitive to one's own shift in attitudes opens the way for placing naïve interpretations on the complex set of events under analysis".

Merriam (1998) admonishes that for the researcher when interacting, interviewing, and observing, everything is of importance in the field. So to ensure that I noted as much of "everything that was of importance in the field" I recorded as many details and reflections as possible before, during and after the interviews. In addition to audio tape-recording the interviews, I took notes of the conversations along with the sights, sounds, smells, etc. I observed of my surroundings – the people, objects and places. My journal therefore became a collection of descriptions, hunches, speculations, problems as well as notes on what I was learning about research practices, ideas and suggestions for changes, and preliminary analysis of patterns and themes I saw emerging. It also contained photos, sketches, maps, a collection of receipts, a record of how money was being spent, time lines, and notes on when I was not feeling one hundred percent either because of illness or because of the heat as this undoubtedly affected my observations and interpretations. I noted who was present, and/or within earshot and when and for how long, what other activities were going on simultaneously, and if and when disruptions occurred. I also received feedback from my research assistant, which included her personal feelings, perceptions, and observations. Her feedback filled in some of the gaps of detail and often offered a different and helpful insight. Her remarks were added to the journal.

Reinharz (1992: 26) declares that every aspect of the researcher's identity can impede or enhance empathy. In my quest to be non-judgemental and open I was compelled to consider the ways in which my identity impacted on my ability to facilitate rapport with my participants. Before, during and after my field work I was ever mindful and reflective of this, as a: married woman, childless (at that time), solo travelling, mainly English-speaking (but also some French and Arabic), feminist, Canadian/Western, 33 year old, experienced traveller, non-Church going, school teacher, and Ph.D student of Anglo-Saxon and distant African heritage, etc., etc.. Keeping a journal was a very useful tool for this purpose.

Being in the field, away from the university, where I can always find a source – a reference or a fellow researcher to which/whom I could turn to for the purpose of discussing/learning more about research problems/issues, I felt a little lost at times. However, by keeping a journal I was able to dialogue with myself and over time often came to a better understanding of the research problems/issues. Listening to my participants share their stories of abuse, rape and other forms of violence at times affected my frame of mind and disrupted my sleep. Again, journaling offered an outlet for expressing my emotions.

I went back to the Philippines four months later (September, 1998) to participate in an unrelated research project for the World Bank on the Philippine education sector study, which focussed on the bilingual language policy[6]. Whilst there I revisited some of the NGOs and got news of some of my participants. My research tasks entailed observing classroom learning in both primary and high schools in the Manila area and in Cebu city area, interviewing teachers, school administrators, university professors, and government officials. This opportunity gave me further valuable insight into aspects of the formal education system- its curricula, teaching methods, teacher training, history and language as modes of instruction. These interviews and observations provided supplementary personal encounters for my Ph.D. study.

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[6] World Bank. (1999). *Philippine Education Sector Study*. Washington, DC. and

**Credibility/ Trustworthiness**

To guard against researcher biases distorting the logic of evidence within this openly ideological research it was necessary to validate the research by formulating self-corrective techniques that check the credibility of data (Lather 1986). "The job of validation is not to support an interpretation, but to find out what might be wrong with it" (Cronbach 1980). In my study, I used several strategies to ensure credibility and trustworthiness.

To achieve "objective subjectivity" (Lather 1986: 76) I engaged in a process of self-reflection on my subjectivity and biases and maintained an atmosphere of openness. I opted for a loosely structured interview guide. I allowed for spontaneity during the discussion, which removed the possibility of prejudgement and brought credibility to the information acquired. Also by allowing the participants to "digress" as Yeandle (1984) calls it, into details of their personal histories an opportunity to do a "reliability check" was allowed as the women reviewed the chronology of events and confirmed or unconfirmed elements of their stories. Through cross- examination and probes, the risk of misinformation of issues discussed was reduced. This verification of "facts" and "events" was sought from the information I received from the participants (Patton 1985). For example, credibility and trustworthiness were sought by discovering inherent contradictions in the participants' responses and then questioning them further. Thus, to find contradictions in the interviewees' responses the same question was worded differently. Also the ODW interviewees were interviewed twice with a time lag. During the second interview I

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Brigham, Susan & Castillo, Emma (1999). *Background Paper: Bilingual Education Sector Review.* World Bank, Washington, D.C.

established credibility of the data by "member checks" (recycling analysis back through at least a sub-sample of respondents). Furthermore, a certain degree of triangulation of the data was achieved through use of different sources of data (i.e. the interviews of the four different groups: ODWs, NGO executive directors and workers, government administrators and the Legislator in Congress as well as the literature review) and through different methods of collecting the data (i.e. interview and document analysis). This enabled me to explore my data for patterns of similarity and difference.

Construct validity, which entails constant dialogue between the researcher, the participants' narratives and the theory was also used. It involved a "systemized reflexivity" which is a habitual and continual process that involves reflecting on the relationships and mutuality of the researcher, the interviewees and the theory which is essential and contributes to the growth of change enhancing theory (Lather 1986:67). Also catalytic validity was an integral part of this research process. By consciously channelling the impact of the research process, the participants gained self-understanding through research participation (Lather 1986:67).

As an "outsider" – i.e. not Filipino, not Asian, not from another developing country, and not an ODW I anticipated some distrust and perhaps doubt from my interviewees toward me and my study. Yet this was not my experience. In fact as a "knowledgeable stranger" a term used by Evans (1979) I was able to establish a rapport with my participants quickly. In addition, it seemed the participants' knowledge of my previous research in Filipino migrant workers which I did for my Master's study – "The experiences and perceptions of Filipino live-in caregivers: A Study of their integration into Canadian Society" (Brigham, 1995) gave me legitimacy as a competent researcher in the area. I believe they may have been more willing to share their stories with me because I was not a part of their world and would not likely be seen again. Furthermore, understanding that I was a professional researcher, working under ethical guidelines set out by the University of Alberta, the participants knew I would not discuss the interview with anyone else (Zimmerman, 1977). Another advantage of being a "knowledgeable stranger" was that I had a certain distance from the culture in which I was conducting my research, which enabled me to pose questions and analyse my observations from a different perspective. Had I been conducting my research in my home culture I may have been blind to taken-for-granted values and assumptions. Reinharz (1992:260-261) notes that "feminist researchers argue that studies of women in a particular country should be done by women of that country" because "even an empathetic outsider cannot know women the way women know themselves". However, Reinharz (1992) goes on to say that this has its limitations – it can lay the groundwork to solipsism or projection and could easily verge into ethnocentrism. Having had previous experience conducting a study on Filipino immigrant women working as live-in caregivers in Canada for my Master's study, I know that it is possible for an informed outsider who is not of the same culture/nationality of the participants to make a valuable contribution to research.

I agree with the statement that the "epistemology of insiderness" (Reinharz, 1992:261) principle should not restrict researchers to studying only their own experiences in their own countries/cultures because "as women we are entitled to study anything". I don't believe that my research should not be dismissed solely on the basis of my nationality, which is not Filipino. Moreover, "as we study women's experiences we think we do not share, we sometimes find we actually do share it in some way". I believe that the reader of this study may well find that they, as I did, share the participants' experiences in some way.

Kato (2000) compares two qualitative analyses, one by a native researcher and the other by a non-native (i.e. not Japanese) researcher, with opposite conclusions on the present-day practices of the Japanese tea ceremony. She supports the claim by Marcus (1997) that the ethnography conducted by researchers with identity and personal connection with the people in question could not be matched by the ethnography conducted by researchers without them. Yet, she does claim that there are some contributions which non-native ethnographers alone could make, and that the ethnography should keep being thickened through accumulations of *both* native's and non-native's works. She states:

> Non-native ethnographers' position as "guests" can privilege them to have an exceptional access to certain information. Second, the native people's reaction to non-native researchers and the researchers' analysis on it themselves make interesting objects of comparison with those of native researchers, and will enrich ethnography as a whole. And last, non-native ethnographers' tackle on unfamiliar culture and people will prevent us from monism that there is *only* one true view

> on a culture, as well as from extreme "native-centrism" that *only* the native can see it. Thus, only through the critical accumulation of native's and non-native's works, though perhaps the native's works will more often criticize the non-native's works than vice versa, ethnography must be thickened. (Kato, 2000: 9-10)

### Data Analysis

The objective of data analysis in this study is to discover patterns and understand the topics and issues as seen by the participants. The findings and outcomes are presented as a mix of "thick" description and "thick" analysis. Denzin (1989: 83) uses the term "thick" descriptive to mean:

> Detail, context, emotion, and the webs of social relationships that join persons to one another. Thick description evokes emotionality and self-feelings. It inserts history into experience. It establishes the significance of an experience, or the sequence of events, for the person or persons in question. In thick description, the voices, feelings actions, and meanings of interacting individuals are heard.

I took Denzin's warning of not describing absolutely everything, avoiding the inclusion of trivial and mundane details, and focussing on what is important. Thick description is balanced by and leads into thick interpretation.

Dobbert (1982) advises that analysis should not be left to the end of the research project, but should be an integral part of the ongoing process of the research. As I collected the data, I pursued specific leads in the next data collecting session based on the periodic review of fieldnotes and my personal journal and returned to the participants or documents as was necessary. After the data had been collected and the core of the interviews transcribed I completed a formal analysis. This required a careful, minute examination of the data and a systematic organising of the data by looking at relationships between the participants, their environment and experiences. I searched for patterns, discovered what was important, what was learned and what I was to tell others (Bogdan & Biklen 1992). A thematic analysis allowed for the clarification of how education relates to the ODW experience in all its phases. Concepts, issues and themes guided by the conceptual framework for the study as earlier discussed facilitated the directions of the data analysis. However, there was also critical openness to fresh themes and questions suggested by the data collected.

### Limitations

I had hoped to have a more religiously diverse representation of participants, particularly of the Muslim faith, so that the role of religion could be further explored. Religion was obviously an important part of most of the participants' lives and if more, or at least one other religious group was represented, the ways in which religion shapes the participants' experiences could be contrasted, compared, and better understood. However, my participants were all of the Christian (Protestant and Catholic) creed.

### Ethical issues

This study was guided by the University of Alberta's *University Standards for the Protection of Human Research Participants* (USPHRP) (1991), which were developed in keeping with accepted norms across a wide variety of fields including the humanities and the natural, medical and social sciences.

"Research may be viewed as ethical when the benefits outweigh the risks and the participants' welfare is safeguarded." (USPHRP, 1991:3). In this sense the research was ethical. Before deciding to participate in this study, the (potential) participants received well-understood information about the nature and objectives of the study and their obligations (i.e. how much time would be involved, if they would require using transportation, etc.). A letter of consent was not required for the participants to sign as I felt this would be culturally inappropriate and unnecessary when dealing with adult participants.

All participants were voluntary participants. There was no undue inducement that would have undermined their voluntariness of participation, nor any coercion. They understood that they could withdraw from the study at any time without penalty or guarantee of anonymity. I assured the participants of anonymity and confidentiality, although the OWWA and POEA administrators and Congressman did not feel it necessary to remain anonymous. They and the NGO executive directors were made aware of the fact that their anonymity may not be assured especially as it is known and easily discovered who are/were the executive directors of which NGOs at the given time. They did not ask to be kept anonymous. However, confidentiality of the data and anonymity of the ODW research participants were observed.

My research assistant was oriented to the nature of the study, her role in the research, and the ethical issues and procedures outlined in the University of Alberta's *University Standards for the Protection of Human Research Participants* (USPHRP) (1991) during two meetings prior to beginning the interviews. She agreed to maintain anonymity and keep the participants' interviews confidential. We had frequent opportunities to discuss the USPHRP and other research related issues in informal and formal meetings between the two of us over the duration in the field.

In keeping with one of the purposes of qualitative research – evaluation of such things as "policies, practices and innovations" (Peshkin, 1993:27) the study provides evaluative material. This will have implications for improving and transforming the educational dimensions of government policies regarding migrant workers by taking into account the realities of development affecting the lives of South peoples. It will also be valuable to NGOs as it will illuminate how education can contribute to ODWs' empowerment. Therefore, the dissertation in part will be made available to the NGOs with which I worked and the two Philippine government administrations.

This study, which began in the field in 1998 and took four years to analyse and write up, resulted in a large volume of rich data. While not all could be included in this thesis, what is presented here convey to the reader the richness of the overall data collected and analysis undertaken.

# Chapter Four: ODW Pre-departure Stage: The impact of economics and the family-household on decision to migrate

## Introduction

In the age of globalisation and the "Asian economic crisis" of 1997-98, migrant women's decisions to migrate encompass wide-ranging complex motives. Purely demographic, economic, political, social, or cultural explanations fail to appreciate migration on a holistic basis. All of these dimensions are inextricably intertwined. Although the most common motivation for migration cited by all the participants was financial considerations this was neither the sole motivation nor was it easily distinguishable from the social and economic contexts of the family-household, community, education, and personal aspirations which all influenced their decision-making. To better understand the migration motivation categories, which can in turn be examined against other factors such as gender, class, age, and family structure (i.e. marital status and placement of birth in a family) two main themes at the pre-ODW experience stage are explored in this chapter, namely the economic and work conditions of participants and family-household influences. The frequent overlaps of motivations in both themes illustrate the complex nature of the decision-making process for the migrant.

## Economic and work situations of the participants

In order to analyse the ways in which economic factors impacted on the women's decision to go overseas, each woman's economic and work situation in the years prior to and leading up to the day they left the Philippines are presented below.

Firstly, **Mia** reflects on her economic and work status. At an early age Mia learned that all members of the family must help in whatever ways they were capable of to ensure the subsistence of the family.

> *I grew up in a poor family. My mother and father were farmers but we owned no land. My mother also sold native foods to make money but still our income was not enough for our survival.*

As the eldest child she was required to help care for her three brothers and one sister. At seven years old she began to help on the farm and from nine years old she did rice planting. She knew that due to their low income every family member had to make sacrifices. One of the most difficult sacrifices for Mia was having to give up attending school. She ran away from home at age 11 to work as a live-in domestic worker for a family who in turn allowed her to attend school. After four years with the employer family she moved to the city to look for a paying job.

> *I went to Manila when I was 15 to find a job. The employer's nephew was living there, so I went to his home. I looked for a job for two months. In the meantime I did temporary help cooking and cleaning and washing at the employer's nephew's house. They have children but they have an* ayah [nanny] *for the children already so I didn't do any babysitting. After two months I found a job at a Disco Pub as a cashier for two months doing night work. The employer always got angry with me because I would always fall asleep* [laughs]. *So I had to look for another job. I found one as a housemaid at a boarding house. I worked there for room and board. That's where I stayed.*

While working at this job, Mia decided to go overseas at the suggestion of her employer. Mia was a single teenager (17 years old) at the time she went abroad. She clearly links her economic situation to her reason for going overseas: "Because of poverty I was forced to become a domestic worker and was willing to go to Singapore as a DH [Domestic Helper]".

**Delia** graduated from College with a degree in agriculture. She details what she did after graduation:

> *After I graduated I worked for the Bureau of Forest Development in the same province. I moved away from home for one month, but I could not climb the mountain and we have to climb the mountain everyday. It was like a forest ranger job. So I quit. Then I landed a job at the capital of our province in the resource office. I stayed only half a year. Then I quit and decided to go to Kuwait...*

Although she held a job close to the time she decided to go overseas she was dissatisfied with her salary because it did not contribute enough to her family. Delia links her decision to go abroad with economic circumstances: "It's because of the kind of life here in the Philippines. We are poor people. In our family there are many [members]. We are not in the middle class..."

**Val** graduated with a Bachelor of Elementary Education. Immediately following graduation Val got a teaching job. She describes her first two teaching positions:

> *I taught in a Catholic school for boys. They liked me so I stayed for eight months to practice teaching proficiency. I then taught at a Protestant Learning Centre. I stayed for one year and taught grades Nursery to Kindergarten Two. After that, I resigned on my doctor's advice because of my voice - a larynx deficiency.*

Due to her larynx problem, her desire to try something new, and a wish for a "quieter" work environment she looked for a non-teaching job. She found short-term jobs, which she summarises:

> *So I then worked at a [private] business. I was assigned as a manager for one year and eight months. After that, I applied as a weigher in packing for six months in Philippines Foods. That was only temporary. I finished my contract and I transferred to Dole Philippines at the procurement office for six months. After six months I had a provisional rest. When I went home, I found out that my father was sick so I stopped working to take care of my father.*

After her father died, Val went to Manila "to look for greener pastures". While staying with friends she visited a hiring agency and put in applications to go overseas. Val's reason for going overseas was economically based, but she explains that several other factors (such as family, education, health, etc.) impacted on her decision. Asked if she felt going abroad was her only option she stated it was not as she would have "just landed a job here [in Manila]". Val explains that this responsibility to her family and their financial troubles are her reasons for wanting to go overseas again as a domestic worker. Before going overseas the second time Val was a domestic helper in Manila, she explains: "Between 1992 and 1995 I lived in Manila. I took temporary jobs as domestic helpers in Manila, washing clothes for neighbours, just to survive. I would not ask my family for money. Then I went to Saudi."

**Cher** was a homemaker before going overseas. She and her family live in a two-room *nipa* hut sparsely furnished with a small wooden table and bench and hammocks hanging from the ceiling beam. There is no indoor plumbing and water is drawn from the outdoor well. In the yard there are an outhouse and a pigpen holding two medium sized pigs. As it was a little dark inside the hut and her husband was still asleep behind the curtained off bedroom, we took the bench out into the yard and sat in the shade of a tree to talk as Cher breast fed her baby. Before going overseas, she explains, she had two young children which kept her days very busy. She notes that her husband is a tricycle driver and "does not make a big income for all five of us". Her husband does not own the tricycle nor do they own their *nipa* hut. Their economic situation was the main reason for Cher's decision to migrate as an ODW. She felt she had only one option to going overseas - selling Halo Halo or charcoal but it would have generated very little income. She now has three children and her financial concerns are still foremost on her mind.

**Dawn** graduated from college with a degree in Midwifery. After graduation she practised midwifery at a private clinic in Pugo for almost two years and also helped her friends in the community deliver their babies without charge before getting married and starting a family. She found herself in financial dire straits when she and her husband separated and she was left to raise the children on her own. When her husband left the family they had two children aged three and one and Dawn was pregnant with their third child. Dawn's options for generating income while having sole responsibility of raising her young children on her own were extremely limited. Dawn returned to live with her aunt - a single woman who had raised Dawn and her six younger siblings on the salary she made from dressmaking. Two years after her husband left, Dawn went overseas as a domestic worker leaving her three children (then aged two, three and five) to be cared for by her aunt. As a single mother receiving no support from the children's father, she believed this was her best option: "I went because I was separated from my husband and my life was very hard. So when an old lady came here from an agency [to recruit me] I decided it was best to go."

If she had not gone overseas she and her children would have been dependent on her auntie and other family members for financial support. If she had not gone overseas she may have found a job in the community but not as a midwife. She explained that her medical instruments were no good because "the kids played with them and wrecked them". Unskilled jobs within the village were very difficult to find and would pay a low salary.

**Bella** graduated from college with a degree in midwifery. Her first job after graduation was as a midwife at the hospital in Agra. "I did not enjoy it so much because it was run by the Catholic nuns and they are so strict regarding the policies. I was still single [at that time] but boys cannot go there". During this job she was studying part-time toward a degree in Education.

After three years she left the job and gave up her studies as well. She explains:

> *I then transferred to Parents Plan International - an NGO. I enjoyed this job. I stayed there for three years. I resigned because I got married and I always got pregnant [laughs]. It is difficult to be married and work [outside the home]. As an NGO we have to spend hundred percent of our time there and I am neglecting my family. My husband asked me to stay at home, so I resigned.*

For three years she was a "plain housewife". But "I was bored," she says so "I applied as an assistant clerk for the Mayor in the Municipality near to our house" and got the job.

> *I stayed one year at the municipality office. The salary was very low, only 300 pesos a month, so after one year I resigned. Again I was a plain housewife but I heard that Parents Plan International was sponsoring income-generating projects like swine raising. As one of the beneficiaries I took care of five pigs for income. I didn't make much money from this because marketing is the big problem. The pig grows for four months. For those four months you are losing money because you are feeding it. If you do not sell it in six months you are losing more. But, there was no profit because there was no market! We could not sell the pigs at the projected time. Well, I did this for one year [then] I stayed home and took care of my children.*

By this time Bella had had three children, the youngest of whom was two years old. After staying at home for two years, she got another job as a nursing aide, which she worked at for four years.

> *I was a nursing aide. They do not call you a midwife. The title is 'Nursing Aide' even though the work is the mid-wife job. The salary is not very good, because it is government run. At that time it was transferred from national government to the local government. Before we were receiving the salary from President Ramos, but now it is paid locally and it is less salary. I worked in the recovery, nursing and delivery rooms. I was receiving only 2700 pesos plus a subsidy of 530 each month, but there were deductions for GSIS, medical insurance and other insurance. So I only received 700 plus pesos every 15 days. In one month you receive 1500 pesos. This is not enough for the children to go to school. It buys only food and sometimes it is not even enough for food.*

At this time, she explains, her husband was employed as

> *a driver for Parents Plan International. But he resigned and took a loan of 14,000 pesos a month to buy a taxi. As of yet we do not have an income from it. We are paying the bank each month. The money we receive [from operating the taxi] pays to keep the taxi running.*

Bella and her family were experiencing economic hardships and were unable to pay school fees for the children due to her low paying job and the taxi, which has not yet made a profit. Because of this Bella resigned from her job and applied to go to Hong Kong.

**Tessy** left school at age 16. She explains:

> *I stopped high school in third year because we had no money so at 16 years old I went to Manila as a maid for two years and then at 18 I returned because my uncle asked me to go home and finish high school.*

With the help of a government scholarship and financial support from a community group, Tessy was able to go on to complete a degree in 1993 in Elementary Education during which time she got married and had her first child (born in 1992). She then began a Masters degree but was not able to finish it due to a lack of money. In 1995 she had to leave her husband and her child in the care of her mother and father to go to teach in Pangasinan for one year. She states, "I needed to sacrifice [being with my family] to earn money."

Tessy's decision to go abroad as an ODW related principally to difficulties in finding employment:

> *I have never had a permanent job. It is very hard finding a job in the Philippines. That is why after I graduated from College I went to Singapore because there was no job here and I have to earn money. I worked there for one year and four months to earn money!*

She is presently employed as a substitute kindergarten teacher on contract for six months.

**Tonnette** has been a homemaker for 20 years. She explains that after high school she got a job at the *Barangay* (local municipality) office: "I was a *Barangay* official for a very low salary (P600/month) and then I got married. I became a housewife after marriage and had my children. I am still a housewife now". She and her husband had five children.

They found it difficult for their family of seven to survive, let alone ensure that their children received a good education on her husband's wage: "My husband was earning a low salary. He is a government employee." Their financial difficulty was the main factor in Tonnette's decision to go overseas.

**Teri** graduated from college with a secretarial degree. Following her graduation she worked one year in Manila as a factory worker, then two years as a supervisor in an insurance agency in San Fernando. After meeting and then marrying her husband in 1989 she quit her job. They had a baby boy three years later.

Her husband was employed as "a dump truck driver, a driver of heavy equipment". Living on his wage had been difficult. She explains: "The salary of my husband was not enough for us. It did not meet all our needs. I wanted to earn money, so when the boy was two years old, I decided to go to Singapore in 1994."

**Ta Ta** reports that her family and her relationships with every one of its members – be they good or bad relationships - have been the main influence in her life. At an early age Ta Ta knew her father was "irresponsible" but she developed a respect for her mother who kept the family together single-handedly by working long hours at whatever jobs she could to make sure her family survived.

> *... frankly speaking, my father was a gambler. You know the Chinese! He used to go to other countries to gamble, like Malaysia, because Malaysia is near the Philippines. He was a trader before. But he is really a gambler, you know, playing mah-jongg and poker, and all those games.*

Ta Ta explains that to pay for her private school education and for her siblings to attend public school she, her mother, and her siblings all had to work:

> *Actually, my mother could not afford [to pay for my private school fees] so she took in laundry. Yes washing other people's dresses just to earn money, because my father was irresponsible. I was the eldest, so I had to take my brothers and sisters to sell coconuts or vegetables in the market.*

Ta Ta received her high school diploma in 1970 after which she got married at age17 and then had a child, who unfortunately died. Two years later she had a baby girl. She and her husband had been married for nine years and had had four children when her husband left. "It has been 19 years since I have had contact with my husband. He eloped with another woman. To this day I do not know why, you know? He did not even call just to say hi."

Her husband's leaving had a great impact on Ta Ta's life and a positive influence on her personality.

> *In High School I am emotional. I am a sentimentalist. I was dependent on my husband for everything, maybe because of my young age. But after I became single, I developed the survival instinct because of my children. I have to live. I have to accept that this is my life because I was a single parent. Before I was not like that. I [have become] self confident since I became a single parent.*

To make an income Ta Ta did laundry for people at her home and three years later took a job outside the home:

> *I [became] a government postal employee in 1982. I acquired that job because I used to do the laundry of the director. [I got that job] maybe only because the director took pity on me as I had no husband.*

During this time she also started college but she adds, "In 1983, I had to quit college because my children are growing up. I want my children to go to school and it is expensive..."

Because her salary at the post office was so low and as her children's needs required more money, Ta Ta decided to go overseas for the first time to Hong Kong. She notes:

> *In 1986, my friend offered me a chance to go abroad. She said there would be a big salary. So without thinking of so many things, "Oh yeah, I will go" as there is a need, because I am a single parent with four kids, so I decided I will go. You see I separated from my husband in 1979 and I [have since] stayed with my mother. So I tried my luck, but....* (voice trails off). *Economics is the main reason why I went overseas - of course!*

Ta Ta stayed in Hong Kong for one year and returned to the Philippines in 1987. During the next three years, until she went overseas again in 1990, she was a stay at home mother looking for work and surviving on the indirect support of her siblings – "My brothers and sisters help my mother. She then gives me some of the money they give her to help me."

Ta Ta explains that she got a job in Kuwait as an ODW with the help of "Filipino traffickers" who "sell their countrymen to get money". She was willing to take the chance because she was planning to set up a business in the future:

> *Because of my wanting to have higher financial situation, you know for financial reasons [I went to Kuwait]. For me, that is the only reason because if I want to go into business, I have no capital! I said I must go and maybe I can save money there.*

She worked four months before having to return to the Philippines because of the Gulf War and stayed at home for three months. She explains that when she got back from Kuwait, she went into the business of sewing.

> *I made slippers, wallets, bags... I sold [them] and made a little profit. I stopped because the market was no good. But when someone orders big orders for 100 pieces I cannot do it because I cannot buy the materials. The supermarket ordered large numbers, 100. That was September 1991. So another friend asked me if I want to go to Malaysia. I asked my mother and I told her I didn't not want to go! My sister said, "This is a good opportunity. They are offering you 10,000 pesos a month!" I am afraid, but my sister insisted.* "Mana [sister], *you go! It is good!" I told her, " OK, but this is not my decision. You should raise my children and give them food." Then I asked my mother's blessing. "Will I go?" She said, "OK, you go!" See? I told them... [so three months after returning from Kuwait I went to Malaysia].*

Again, Ta Ta's reasons for going illegally to Malaysia was based on economic need, although as the quote above shows, her initial preference not to go was reversed through considerable pressure from her sister.

**Marcie** attended college for three years, during which time she was "self-supporting", working as a civil servant in the department of trade and then in the personnel department as a clerical worker. After two years of college and before marriage (she married her husband in her third year) Marcie was employed: "I worked at a private firm, as a secretary to the sales manager. I enjoyed this job".

She resigned from this job when she got married. She was a homemaker for 16 years and had four children.

> *After marriage, I stayed at home to have and raise my children. Then when the children were more grown up, I went to an employment agency for a job. I had wanted to go to Kuwait. I had a passport already to go to work in a factory overseas. Unfortunately there was the Gulf war.*

While a homemaker, Marcie also taught a non-formal physical education course (aerobics) for a small amount of pay for four years from1988 to 1992.

After the disappointment of not being able to go to Kuwait because of the war, Marcie went again to an employment agency to find a local job.

> *They noticed me and said that I am smart looking and confident and suggested a job overseas. Maybe of the twenty other applicants, they chose me to take the overseas job. I had bought my passport already. So when they asked if I would go to Saudi the first question I asked myself was, "Yes or no?" When I came home I [had] already decided. I did not ask my husband anymore. In fact I had already signed the contract before I came home. At that time we had a financial problem. At first my husband did not want [me to go] but I explained and with the money coming in, who will say no? I was blessed.*

Marcie's and her husband's financial problems were the result of putting the eldest son in a private school, which had high fees and then enrolling the twins, when they were old enough to begin, in the same expensive private school. Having three children in private school with their low income put them in debt. Marcie's reasons for going overseas, therefore, were financially based albeit conditioned by her and her husband's desire to put their children through expensive private schooling.

**Roe** graduated from high school and then went to Manila to attend vocational school. With her certificate she got a job as a sewer. She describes her job:

> *I got a job at "Fabrica". I worked there for 4 months. I did sewing. We made shoulder bags. The salary is good only if you do overtime but it is difficult to stay at this job. I work eight hours from 8:00 [a.m.] to 5:00 [p.m.] but with overtime more hours. I go early in the morning on the bus because I live far from the work place.*

> *It's 5:30 [a.m.] to 7:30 [p.m.] with the time on the bus, but with overtime, I get home at maybe 10:30 p.m. or later at night.*

Disappointed with these working conditions, Roe then quit her job and decided to go overseas as a domestic worker. While she waited for her application to be processed, which took six months, she was unemployed. Roe declares that her reason for going was to get a high paying job. "A friend of mine said that they [Hong Kong employers] pay high salaries and I felt challenged so I said I will try".

**Analysis of economic factors**

Several economic indicators highlight the problems Filipino women are facing. The number of unemployed Filipinos in January 2001 was 3.6 million up from 2.9 million in January, 2000, largely due to a decrease in the agricultural labour force in 2000, while the number of underemployed is 4.743 million - one sixth of the total of employed people (Economic update, World Bank, 2001; Philippine census, 2001). In 1999, 37 percent of the population was living below the poverty line (World Bank, 2001). These problems of poverty, unemployment, underemployment, and underdevelopment are therefore significant factors in pushing women out of the Philippines (Oxfam, 1997; De Dios 1992; Senate Committee Report No. 1682, 1991; Heyzer et al, 1992; Cheng, 1999). The participants' employment status and work experiences support this.

Before applying to go abroad seven of the twelve participants were either unemployed (Val) or employed as homemakers but actively looking for work (Cher, Dawn, Tessy, Tonnette, Teri, and Marcie). The other five participants were employed but dissatisfied with their low salaries and work conditions –Mia (housemaid), Delia (resource officer), Bella (nursing aide/midwife), Ta Ta (postal worker) and Roe (sewing machine operator). The employment circumstances of these participants are reflective of the findings of a study compiled by the Women in Development Foundation (WIDF) for the POEA (Beltran, 1992), which reported that the majority of respondents in (52.15 percent) were unemployed before going overseas. Before becoming ODWs, 24.43 percent of employed respondents were working as domestic helpers. 23.43 percent were working in other low-paying occupations (with a monthly wage of 200 to 4000 pesos per month) including professional or semi-professional jobs. (These low-paying occupations include teacher, midwife, secretary, clerk, beautician, and salesperson)[1]. Similarly, the Asian Pacific Mission for Migrant Filipinos (APMMF) (1992) found that 50 percent of ODWs were previously employed with the largest concentration being in clerical work, followed by domestic service, and some had been employed as professionals, mainly nurses and teachers.

Two of the employed participants point out the wage disparity between professional or government jobs in the Philippines and ODW jobs in receiving countries. Ta Ta clarifies: "Although in Hong Kong you are only a domestic helper they are paying you high. As a government employee in the Philippines the salary is very low…" Bella similarly adds: "We have college degrees but we can make bigger salaries as domestic helpers!" She elaborates, "I received 3000 Hong Kong dollars [21,000 pesos] a month [as an ODW]… In the Philippines [in 1993] as a midwife in one month you are receiving only 1500 pesos after deductions." This wage disparity is cited as a major factor behind ODW migration (Heyzer *et al*, 1992). When the average per capita incomes of ODW sending and receiving countries are compared, the wage contrast Ta Ta and Bella are talking about is clearly evident. For example, the average per capita income (in US dollars) of the sending country of the Philippines is $730; Sri Lanka is $470; and Bangladesh is $210. While the per capita income of the receiving country of Hong Kong is $11,490; Singapore is $11,160; Saudi Arabia is $7,050; and Malaysia is $2,320 (World Bank, 1992).

Ten of the participants came from rural areas, three of whom (Mia, Tessy and Roe) had moved to urban areas to look for employment before migrating overseas. Six participants came from a farming background (Mia, Val, Cher, Tessy, Roe and Delia, although Delia's farm was not the family's sole means of income). Mia points out an important economic factor that is affecting women in rural agricultural areas when she asserts that the unemployment rate is higher for women than men in rural areas and higher for women in rural areas than women in urban areas. "Poor women in the countryside have no jobs… men also have no jobs but there are more women [unemployed]." She feels this is the main reason why there so many rural women migrating as ODWs: "In my province so many women went overseas to work." She attributes this to the fact that women are more likely to "sacrifice because they need money for their families." By examining the situation for rural women we can conceive better Mia's points, although an unexamined assumption here is that women seemed more willing to sacrifice to help them formulate their financial needs.

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[1] The average monthly wage rates of time-rated workers on a full-time basis have increased since Beltran's (1992) study. As of October, 1999 the average monthly wages, which included basic pay and regular cash allowances for occupations relevant to this study are as follows: sewing machine operators = 5,724; general

Statistics affirm that the unemployment rate of 2000 and 2001 has increased largely due to fewer jobs in the agricultural sector. Additionally, the underemployment rate in the rural areas is 6.3 percent higher than in the urban areas (Economic update, World Bank, 2001; Philippine census, 2001). The unemployment and underemployment increases have been attributed to the reorganisation of agriculture, which reduces the size of landholdings and increases the number of landless families resulting in more unemployed women, many of whom look to migration for employment (Boyd, 1989; Young, 1982; Sassen-Koob, 1984). The reorganisation of agriculture in the Philippines, particularly the move toward export-oriented agriculture, has had a detrimental effect on women. Mass production of crops such as pineapples and sugar has resulted in the eviction of families from their lands. While agribusiness and corporate farming have resulted in some women being hired as wage labour, women are paid half or a third of what men earn and women are often hired only during harvest and planting times while men are hired on a more regular basis. Moreover, when the most fertile lands are taken over by corporations, women have to work harder to produce food for their families. Agricultural mechanisation (such as weeding and fertilising systems) and the destruction of cottage industries have resulted in a replacement of women's labour, leaving women with little economic opportunities (Piglas-Diwas, 1989). Additionally, land ownership is often controlled by men – a pattern of distribution reflected by cultural norms which defines agricultural work as men's work (NCRFW, 1989; NCRFW, 1995). This perception of

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public elementary school teachers = 9,773; general private school teachers = 9,500; professional midwives = 5,817 (POEA statistics, 2001). Current wage of forest rangers is unavailable.

women as housewives not farmers results in women being left out of development programs which could directly improve the living conditions of rural women (Aleta, Silva and Eleazar, 1995). Without technology and support services their work in subsistent farming becomes more arduous and time-consuming. As their produce from subsistent farming is reduced, the nutritional intake of rural women and their families declines (Piglas-Diwa, 1989; Jimenez, 1992; NCRFW, 1989). The rural participants' experiences with unemployment, underemployment and poverty reflect these problems as Mia exemplifies in her comment: "It is the women who carry the burden of the economic crisis, the mothers especially... because they are the ones who budget for family needs."

Two examples of how the *Philippine 2000* program impacted on women workers are provided by Bella and Val. One of the initiatives of the Philippines 2000 program is to enlarge the role of local governments. The Local Government Code (LGC) of 1991 provided that the local government units (LGU) are given more autonomy in their spending of Internal Revenue Allotments. Also, the LGUs are increasingly asked to provide their communities with their own inputs, thereby reducing the financial pressure on the central government (UNESCO, 2000). As Bella explains when her midwife salary was paid by "President Ramos"/ the central government from 1989 to 1991, her salary was considerably higher than it was after "it was transferred from the national government to the local government", when the LGC came into effect. It was partly due to this fall in wage that Bella felt the push to resign and apply for an ODW job. Although the two presidents (Estrada and Macapal Arryo) after President Ramos, who strongly advocated for the *Philippine 2000* program no longer promote this program, their economic policies of globalisation likewise promote the role of foreign investment.

The Philippines 2000 program relies heavily on foreign investment. One way to make the country more attractive to investors/ large corporations is to provide an ever-ready skilled and semi-skilled cheap work force. In a bid to become more competitive the companies keep employees' salaries low by hiring workers on a short-term contractual basis, depriving the workers of job security and benefits. Val's work experiences with the corporations of Philippines Food and Dole Philippines reflects the problems of contractualization discussed in chapter one, which usually affects more women workers than men. Philippines Food and Dole Philippines are two of the larger corporations in the country. For Val, taking contractual work has meant a decrease in her wages and the loss of job security, so that she had to always be looking for another job in the likely case her contract would not renewed – neither of which were.

The participants' economic situations are similar to that of other ODWs who tend to come from the socio-economically lower echelons of society (Saith, 1997). Seven participants out of twelve described themselves as "poor" at the time they decided to go overseas. They classified themselves this way because they did not own land or a house (they were either renting a *nipa* hut, staying at parents' home, or staying in home of the employer) and their family income was very low (minimum wage, which is 250 pesos a day)[2]. They were living at a basic subsistence level as defined by IBON (2001). At this level, they are not guaranteed daily access to basic commodities such as food, clean water and shelter (Dela Rosa, 1996; NCRFW, 1995). Bella, Teri, and Mia provide examples of statements that reflect this standard of living. Bella declares: "[Our family income is] not enough for the children to go to school. It buys only food and sometimes it is not even enough for food." Teri maintains: "The salary of my husband was not enough for us. It did not meet all our needs." Mia likewise states: "Our income was not enough for our survival." They often received support from other family members. The participants who were unemployed had one adult in their home earning an income. Dawn was a stay at home single mother of three young children and was being supported by her aunt who did tailoring work. Cher was a stay at home mother of two young children surviving on the low wage of her husband who is employed as a tricycle driver. (He does not own the tricycle). Tessy's husband is also a tricycle driver, who does not own the tricycle. She and her husband lived on the low wages of her husband and were raising a toddler at the time she went overseas.

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[2] According to IBON (Feb. 26, 2001) P250 fulfils only half of the basic necessities for a "normal sized" family (a family of six) to survive in one day. As the daily cost of living is P418.39 in Metro Manila, P383.35 in agricultural areas outside of Metro Manila, and P403.33 in non-agricultural areas outside of Metro Manila.

Moreover, those whom were homemakers claimed they were not making any economic contributions to their families (e.g. with the statements, "I am/was JUST a housewife, I don't work"), yet they mentioned that they had been raising pigs, chickens and vegetables for sale (Bella, Tessy, Cher); doing other people's laundry (Ta Ta); making and selling sweets, Halo Halo and charcoal (Marcie, Cher); farming, and nursing the sick (Val); as well as keeping house, doing childcare and budgeting the family's income. The participants' downplaying of their contributions is typical of rural women (cf. Piglas-Diwas, 1988; Israel-Sobritchea, 1991; Miron, 1997). In her study of Filipino rural women Miron (1997) reports that her participants were not aware of their actual work roles and contributions to the family. When asked about their work they usually spoke of their traditional household responsibilities or answered "*Wala*" (nothing), yet often in addition to homemaking, the women sewed and sold clothes, raised pigs, ran *sari sari* stores, cared for small children, and operated craft enterprises. Their small income-generating enterprises were invisible to the community and to the women themselves. Unlike public sector work the work of small enterprises occurs in and near the household and is therefore not considered "real" work (Beneria 1982, Bruce 1989 cited in Miron 1997). Because their enterprises are small, their economic contributions to the family are unacknowledged and undervalued. IBON (1993) points out that women in the agricultural sector provide as much as 30 to 40 percent of the family income through raising animals, selling vegetables and working as hired labourers although this contribution is not widely acknowledged.

Even though household responsibilities in the home are crucial to the maintenance of the family and continuation of society (usually performed by women in the framework of the sexual division of labour), under the capitalist system they are seen as valueless because they do not contribute to capital accumulation and exchange (Eviota, 1992; Malos, 1995; Waring, 1988)[3]. However, when the participants worked as ODWs, doing reproductive work similar to what they do at home, they refer to it as ("real") work mainly because it is paid. The participants make comments about being "a real help to my family by sending them money" yet they did not claim they were of any particular (financial) help when working in the home, even when they earned money from small enterprises. A related point is that the political economy of housework has rendered paid (ODW) work ambiguous, which has significant implications for ODWs' legal rights. Since ODW work is not seen as real work, ODWs are denied the status as workers and they are denied legal protection in labour receiving countries (Cheng, 1999). This is elaborated on in Chapter 6.

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[3] Angeles (1994: 133) points out that capitalism alone cannot account for the rise in the sexual division of labour and subsequent subjugation of women because the sexual division of labour existed .ring other modes of production, "and hence, could not be reduced as solely determined by the econc base of society."

In addition to meeting the immediate financial needs of a growing family some participants (e.g. Val, Bella and Roe) were saving for their futures. Val's hope was to make money so that she could invest in her sewing business or start a new business. Bella wanted to use her income to pay down the debt incurred from the taxi her husband owned and operated. Roe wished to prepare for her family's future by starting her own business.

In various ways economic factors overlap with family influences. For example Dawn, Ta Ta and Val suffered the loss of the family's male breadwinner by death or through marital breakdown, which plunged the family into dire economic circumstances. This loss precipitated their decision to look for work as a domestic worker overseas in order to fulfil their roles as the sole economic breadwinner of their families. Additionally having a family member available to take over the family tasks assigned to the migrant women enabled the participants with children, Bella, Dawn and Ta Ta to make this choice.

Because not all unemployed women or women from socioeconomically disadvantaged backgrounds chose migration as an option, it is necessary to explore other factors that lead women to migrate as ODWs. The next section will further examine the influence of family-household on the participants at the pre-departure stage.

### The Family-household system

As stated above, the motivations for going overseas are often complex and there are many overlaps. In order to make a link between the traditional micro explanations of migration to the macro explanations in the next section, this section focuses on the family-household and the relationships between its members as they affect the participants' decision to become ODWs. Some of the important features in the complex social, cultural and structural contexts of family-household influence on the women's decision to migrate will be unravelled.

### (a). "Family Ties"

In the words of one participant, Marcie, "the most important lesson I learned from my culture is the importance of family ties – close relationship with the family." This sentiment is strongly supported by other participants who feel family ties, especially with parents, siblings, children, and spouses, have the greatest impact on every aspect of their lives such as giving and receiving advice as well as providing mutual financial and emotional support.

For example, Ta Ta's relationships with her family illustrate how tightly bound and mutually supportive each member of her family circle is to one another. Like a web connecting each member, the strands become more and more interwoven. Mother helps daughter, sisters and brothers help their mother and each other. Ta Ta helps her children, her children help her and each other and so on. As Ta Ta clarifies:

> *Our family supports each other. My brothers and sisters help my mother. She then gives me some of the money they give her to help me.... Without my mother I cannot do anything, because when I work she looks after the children – my own when they were younger and now my grandchildren. My children [aged 25, 22, 20 and 19] are not so independent but they have their own jobs now so they give me money, just 500 pesos a month each. They come and stay in the house everyday. I cook the food for them. They are in charge of their own fare for transportation. They make 135 per day six days a week - only one day off a week. They are making 1000 pesos every 15 days with so many deductions. They divide it into two for their fare and their meat also. ...Before I go abroad I always talk it over with my mother, sisters and brothers. I have to ask for my mother's blessing before I go.... [When I decided to go abroad] I told [my sister] "You should raise my children and give them food.... When I go abroad I send [remittances] to the third daughter. I can trust her. She will know what to cook and what to buy. She can manage everything.*

Similarly Tessy and Val explain the importance of family support:

> Tessy: *We help each other [in our family]. My parents help me and I help them also... I needed to sacrifice being with my family [husband and child] to earn money for them.*

> Val: *Family is important. We are ten children in our family. I like to help them and when I am away from them I miss them but I think I do not need to live at home. We were happy before but now we are separated, but they are sometimes writing to me, sometimes calling me, and sometimes I write to them. This letter is for my mother and this one is for all of them. I give advice without my presence. I just pray for them everyday.*

This family-household framework governing inter-personal relationships among family members is so well established that even when nothing specific is said by any family-household member that indicated the women should contribute to the family-household income, the participants "understood" they should make necessary sacrifices to do so and migrating as an ODW was one way to do this. Mia provides an example. She explains how her mother's "jokes" led her to understand that going overseas as a domestic worker was one way for her to make a difference in improving her family's economic problems:

> *My mother always joked since I was a small girl that maybe one day I would go to Japan as an entertainer. She is joking, but when I am growing up I know I must go overseas so I will have money to go to school and so I can send my brothers and sisters to school and so we can transfer to another house... I see that many entertainers have jeeps or tricycles and houses and I want to buy those things for my mother.*

Val explains her family's influences in her decision-making processes. She grew up on a farm in South Catabato with her parents, six brothers and three sisters. Even as a child she understood that she should be helpful to her family: "When I am still young, my dream was just to help my parents. I can see they need me very much..." She asserts that this feeling of responsibility to her family has nothing to do with her position in the family: "I am the middle child – number six". It is because "I have a helpful heart." She adds: "I want to help them. And although my mother did not say nothing about my being responsible for helping them [siblings], I think that is my responsibility being a sister..."

Val admits that as the eldest girl in the family she does have a strong sense of family responsibility. The eldest boy in Val's family is not able to help his siblings very much even though he is single and working. She explains:

> *My eldest brother does not help support our brothers and sisters - not so much. [laughs]. My brother is working on our farm and farming in the Philippines is difficult. My brother is not yet married. Out of ten children, the three oldest are married. Number one, two and five are married already and stable. The seventh sister did not go to school because she is sick. The eighth is at a missionary house for schooling. The ninth, who just graduated in agricultural school is still looking for a job. One brother and his wife are pastors.*

As the breadwinner she has been able to support her family, especially when her father was ill and then died. At the age of twenty Val had quit her job to look after her dying father.

> *So I took care of my father until he died. He died in my arms. After that I am the breadwinner. When he died I take care of my sisters – they are still in school and I managed the farm. ... I left when the family was stable enough.*

She doesn't think her siblings will or should go overseas to work,

> *... because I feel I am the only one to go abroad because I can adjust already. I don't want them to experience what I experienced. I feel pity for them [laughs], because when you go out you have to have a fighting spirit to handle all and be close to the Lord.*

In addition to being the eldest daughter, having religious faith, a "fighting spirit", and a "helpful heart" she notes that the fact that she is single, healthy and college educated are other reasons why she makes sacrifices for her family.

Bella says that the lessons she learned from her family and from the community greatly influenced her life and in turn impacted on her motivation for going overseas. She explains:

> *My parents were very religious which influenced the way we lived. The Ilocano traditionally are very thrifty, so we learn that we must save money for the future. As Filipinos we have the "bayanihan". We help one another. We share food or whatever we have with all our family and neighbours.*

Bella feels that these lessons have been so ingrained in her psyche and that of her generation it has influenced her every action in life and the way of life in the village. In particular her need to save for the future inspired her to work abroad. Also, the *bayanihan* value directly and indirectly impacted on her decision. For example, when she was raising pigs for profit some villagers would take a pig with the promise of payment later but the payment never appeared leaving Bella in debt. Yet because she saw that her neighbours were in need of food and not well off she would not press them for payment. In a direct sense, *bayanihan* stimulated her altruistic desire to make money for the purpose of helping her family and others. Additionally, because of her sense of *bayanihan* certain income generating enterprises, such as swine raising would not be profitable, whereas working as an ODW could be.

She also asserts that education was highly valued in her family. She proudly reports her siblings' careers:

> *I am the second to the eldest. I have two sisters and three brothers and all of them finished college. In my family we have three teachers, one policeman, two in military service and one took engineering but did not finish. This youngest brother is a computer operator now.*

Because of this instilled value of education she was motivated to migrate to ensure she could finance her children's education.

Bella notes the ways in which various family members influenced and enabled her to go overseas. Firstly, her husband's decision to resign from his job then take out a loan to buy and operate a taxi resulted in financial troubles for the family. All the profits earned from the taxi are being put toward paying back the loan. Secondly, her sister-in-law was working as an overseas domestic worker and it was she who suggested Bella do the same job: "I have a sister-in-law who works there in Hong Kong. She said for me to come as a direct hire." And thirdly, her mother-in-law agreed to care for the children in her absence. (Her husband was also absent as he stayed in Baguio – a city in the region where he worked as a taxi driver.)

Ta Ta's sister swayed Ta Ta's decision to go and her mother had the final say in Ta Ta's decisions to go overseas each time Ta Ta went. "Then I asked my mother's blessing. 'Will I go?' She said, 'OK, you go!'"

Directly and indirectly Ta Ta's mother provided what was required for her to go overseas. For example, she explains how her mother's confidence in her gave her an inner strength and a belief that she could survive overseas.

> *My mother never worried about me. She said, "Oh my daughter is the boyish one. She can do everything for herself." And it is true. Physically, I am very boyish and that helps because I am strong.*

In addition, Ta Ta's reliance on her mother has enabled Ta Ta to work outside the home and go overseas. She states: "I am living with my mother. Without my mother I cannot do anything because when I work, she looks after the children."

Although Ta Ta's sister encouraged her to go abroad and her mother gave her blessing her brother was the one to discourage her from further travelling abroad –especially as he had to send her money after Ta Ta arrived back broke from Kuwait during the Gulf War. "My brother sent me money so I could get home from Manila airport and he said, 'Oh, *Mana* [sister] stop going abroad!'"

Ta Ta demonstrates how her family – children mother, sister and brother all had an input into her decision. Ta Ta often reminds her family that the troubles she experienced in her overseas jobs are partly their responsibility too.

All of the women stated that they migrated as ODWs so that they could remit their wages to support their families. The married participants ranked their priority of responsibility to their family-household members this way: children, husband, and in-laws and then parents and siblings whereas the single participants' ranked their responsibility to family-household members in this order: parents, siblings, and aunts.

The desire to finance the education of family members is one of the more common forms of increasing the family's social mobility and one of the most often sited reasons by participants.

The women express their priority needs:

> Tonnette: *I want all the children to finish school and college so in 1995, I went to Kuwait as a DH [domestic helper]. All five children are in school now. They are from 10 years to 19 years old. I want to go abroad again because I do not have enough money. We have five children. Two are in college already and three are in high school.*
>
> Roe: *I went [overseas] to build my family's future and to help my brothers and sister to go to school. They are now all finished their schooling.*
>
> Val: *I want to go back [overseas] again, Ma'am, because my sister needs my support, because when I was in Saudi, I [had] left my brother to finish his course. He just graduated. So now I want the youngest to finish schooling. Next year she will be graduated.*
>
> Mia: *…when I am growing up I know I must go overseas so I will have money to go to school and so I can send my brothers and sisters to school…*
>
> *Marcie: I went [overseas] because we had a financial problem because we were putting my eldest son through school – a private college and then we put the twins in the same college. But we could not afford it, so we took the twins out. Now they go to another [less expensive] college.*

Tacoli (1996: 17) states that "remittances are often invested in the household's 'human capital' by sending [the children] to exclusive and expensive private schools and universities". However, only one of the participants sent her children to an expensive private school (but later withdrew them because of the expense), while the other participants simply wanted their children to attend and complete school – public school and college. This demonstrates that the women focus on practical priority needs for their family not solely for the additional prestige that a private education may afford their children.

The participants have explained the ways in which their sense of responsibility to their families have impacted on their "need" for going abroad. To understand how the participants' personal goals and motivations, the balance of power between members, and the family-household members' input into the decision-making process all impact on decision making, the next section examines the negotiation that takes place between all members before the women made their final decision to migrate.

### (b). Negotiating personal motivations with the normative role in the family-household

The decision to migrate usually is not made individually – it involves other family-household members as they may well be asked to contribute to the migrant woman's processing fees, air ticket, etc. and if there are children, relatives will be asked to care for them in the migrant mother's absence. The family-household usually functions as a unified unit most times so when migration is possible for one of the members, family-household involvement will be no different, and may in fact involve more relatives. For example, each time she considered migrating, Ta Ta had lengthy consultations with her mother, her siblings and her children (especially before her last overseas job as they were older). Bella conferred with her husband, sister, and mother-in-law. Dawn primarily consulted her aunt. Delia consulted her sister and father. Val and Roe discussed migration mainly with their mothers. Tessy talked it over with her husband and her parents. Marcie and Tonnette deliberated it mainly with their husbands. Teri consulted her husband and mother-in-law. Of all the participants only one- Mia, who was living independently of her parents at a young age (quite unusual for a Filipino female youth) made the decision to migrate on her own without consultation with her family-household. Most participants stated that they required "permission" or "blessings" from the "head of the household"[4] or eldest member of the household, (e.g. Ta Ta states, "Then I asked my mother's blessing." Val says, "I asked my mother if I will go out of Mindanao to look for greener pastures. She permitted me because I am still single.") Roe explains how husbands' permission impacts on wives' decision to migrate:

> *Some women have lazy husbands so the husbands allow their wives to go overseas. [But] Some men don't allow their wives to go. It is really up to the husbands if wives can go overseas.*

But she declares that in her case, as a newly married woman who had previously migrated, she did not need to ask her husband's permission as she had already decided before she married that she would go abroad again. Similarly, Marcie proclaims that in her final decision to migrate she signed her contract with no further discussion with her husband, even though he had forbidden her to go abroad when she first broached the subject and she had to convince him to let her go. She asserts: "At first he did not want me to go but I explained why I should and after that with money coming in who can say no? I was blessed."

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[4] According to the census definition, "family headship is usually ascribed to whoever contributes the most to the household economy, the illusion is then created of a family head who is male" (Illo, 1995: 236). The National Census and Statistics Office (NCSO) of the Philippines describes the household head as "the person responsible for the care and organisation of the household… [and who] provides the chief source of income for the household" (NSCO, 1975: xiii cited in Illo, 1995). However, the participants usually referred to their mothers as heads of their households.

All participants acknowledge that women migrate because of a sense of obligation to support the family-household and as Roe suggests above some women have a weak position in the family-household, but participants downplay the notion that women are passively subjected to the control of their family-households. The participants believe "times are changing" and women's role is not limited to homemaking. For example, Tonnette and Marcie emphasise that migration is a way of becoming more autonomous, economically independent and equal in the breadwinner role:

> Tonette: *The Filipino woman does not want to stay inside [the house]. They want experience. They want their own money, not just the money from the husband.*
>
> Marcie: *[More women than men go to work overseas] because Filipinas have equal rights now. Wives, like me, feel that women should also go out and earn money. We should also go out and work because it should not be just up to the men to provide financially for the family. The wives must work.*

Ta Ta provides more detail of how she understands men's and women's roles are changing, so that women are not discouraged from working outside the home:

> *The [sexist] attitude is changing. Of course! Even now it has changed. Not like before in the 1970s [when] the husbands depended on the wives, but it is not like that anymore. These days these [sexist] attitudes cannot be applied now. These days both husband and wife are working. After they come home from work one will cook, the other will take care of the baby. It is the division of labour. Systematical in your life. When my son gets married he will do the dishes. I am motivating him now. He should know that he does not have to have a bigger salary than his wife. He should allow his wife to go to work. The children can manage, except those under one year old, but after that, go to work! If the [sexist] attitude of the Philippines does not change we will not improve.*

Val and Ta Ta suggest that women may in a sense 'do a deal' with their family-household members to get what they personally want (i.e. an adventure, a change, and an experience in a different culture, an escape from the family-household, a chance to find a husband, etc.) by maintaining their normative role as the dutiful daughter/mother. Ta Ta describes her personal desires:

> *I only want to travel. I really want to go abroad to other places just to see the situation. That is why before I had a lot of pen-friends... The number one reason why I want to have foreign pen-friends is so I can learn about other countries, other cultures. That is also why I went to Hong Kong and Kuwait [as an ODW]. I was in Kuwait when the Gulf War arose, so I was able to pass through Iraq and stay in Jordan. Even though it is a war, it was an interesting experience. [Laughs]. You know? Because I was still alive and it was exciting! It was a chance for me to see something [of the world] and help my children too.*

Moreover, Ta Ta is looking for a "foreigner" to marry. She hopes she will find one either through her ODW work or through her pen-pals:

> *I would only marry a foreigner.... Maybe I can meet someone in [my next ODW job]. I have a pen-friend in Alberta. I gave him my telephone number but he didn't give me his. Here is his picture [takes a photograph out of an envelop from her purse. It is a picture of a heavy set white man in his late 60s with a white beard, rosy cheeks and thinning white hair]. My friends tease me, 'Oh, [Ta Ta], he is already your grandfather!' But it does not matter to me. I do not need a young man!...*

Val also suggests that although she primarily wanted to help her family by migrating she had/has another goal in mind:

> *It is important to go abroad. I am interested in finding a husband somewhere in the world. I am searching so I am also writing to pen-pals in Hawaii. I am praying God will give me a perfect husband. I don't think he will be Filipino because I don't have trust in Filipino men. Maybe some [ODWs] find husbands [overseas] if it is God's will.*

Bella supports Val's plan of looking for a husband abroad: "To the unmarried women, maybe I would encourage them [to migrate] ... maybe they can find a future husband outside the country..."

Ta Ta explains that her daughter is going to go overseas as an entertainer and although Ta Ta will worry about her she believes it is the best option for her because of the daughter's unstable marriage and spousal abuse:

> *My daughter will go to Japan. She is in Manila right now just waiting for the visa. She will be earning a good level as an entertainer. I am worried that the job is risky, but I cannot stop her. Her husband is earning too little, and how can I say this? Her husband is responsible, you know, but when he gives her money, after just a few days, he asks her, "Where did the money go?" She cannot go downtown, because he acts as if he likes her to be at home all the time. My son-in-law is so jealous because my daughter is so beautiful. He says, "Maybe there is someone you are meeting there!" So he is not good for her and you know, my son-in-law is hitting my daughter. Not so brutal, but it is also painful. They live in the same lot, in our back yard. It is only a matter of a few metres so I always hear them quarrelling. I do not like it. It is better my daughter is out so I do not have to hear them quarrelling. It is not good for my grandchildren either. My eldest grandchild asks me, "Why are they always quarrelling? My papa is not good? My papa is bad?" Then my grandson says, "Papa is hitting Mama!" Can you imagine a 7 year old boy saying, "Papa is bad"? I say, "Do not say he is bad." The boy is very intelligent. He is always asking questions. He asks why his Mama has to work there, very far [away], so I answer him. I told him, "Later you will understand when you grow older." So my daughter says to me, "Mama, I have to go." And I think it is better for her to go.*

To them it is a trade-off although we shall see in chapter 6 not a very fair trade off for the migrant women as their dreams of exciting experiences, great adventures, and large savings often do not come to fruition.

A few participants state that although it is often assumed that women migrate because of pressure from family-household members they believe that it is in fact the women's strengths not their weaknesses that propel them to migrate, as Bella, Tessy and Ta Ta illustrate. Bella explains that one of the main strengths of women, which capacitates them to migrate is that: "The women are brave to face the situation [overseas]. They are also the fighters. They are the responsible ones…Women take more responsibility for sending their children to school than fathers." Tessy adds, "Women go [overseas] because they plan for life. They understand the future has to be considered."

Ta Ta similarly asserts:

> *There are so many more women than men going overseas because the women are more mature than men and because women are the ones who budget for the needs of the families. The Filipino men just give money to the wife. They will save nothing. They only spend money on the beers. You seldom see men saving money. You seldom see responsible men. Filipino men do not say, "I will give you this money so you take care of this and this". They don't know what needs to be [paid for]. Women are*

> *the ones budgeting for the family, for the education of the children, for the daily foods, daily needs. They know what is required.*

These women's assertion that mothers take more responsibility for ensuring the education of children than fathers may partially explain why there are more women migrating. For example, Bella's husband understood that his investment in a taxi had put them in debt and there was not enough money to pay the children's school fees, yet he was not interested in going abroad himself but was not against Bella migrating to make money:

> *My husband would not go abroad to work because he always tells me that there is no place like home. He is contented with a simple life. He always tells me that I will not ask for more because if you are asking for more and more, you will not be happy because you are not contented.*

A few participants believe that women family-household members will migrate due to the perception of the feminisation of the global market as Val and Mia explain:

> Val: *There more women than men going abroad because for women it is easier to go and the demand abroad is very big for women's jobs like domestic helpers, tutors, caretakers... Men are not so much in demand like construction workers... Also, you must have a degree and more women have degrees, 70 percent of women OCWs have.*
>
> Mia: *Women do not have the opportunities in the Philippines to get jobs and the men also do not, but more women than men are going to work overseas because other countries need women to be entertainers, domestic workers. 80 percent of the OCWs are domestic workers. They [other countries] do not need construction workers, which are male jobs. So, it is the demand for female kinds of jobs.*

As noted earlier in chapter 2, the global market for migrant labour has been skewed towards women particularly in the Asian migration systems in the 1990's. Labour markets have expanded due to the availability of cheap labour provided by Asian migrant women who move from rural to urban or from South to North. Many of these women migrate to work in "feminised" jobs with a significantly large number employed as ODWs.

Mia explains that in addition to these reasons,

> *... The Philippines is suffering from an economic crisis and it is the women who carry the burden of the economic crisis, especially the mothers. A mother wants to help her husband and children, so she goes abroad. So many women will go into debt because they will sell their land, their carabao to get money to pay the recruiters so they can go abroad.*

Since there are more opportunities for women and fewer for men it makes sense to invest in a female member to go abroad. Family-households will reap the biggest financial reward from women's migration. Marcie for example, declares that her husband, who was willing to work even in a "feminine job" as a house-boy and had tried to go overseas, was "not lucky". She explains what happened:

> *My husband tried to go overseas two times. ... He wanted to work in a hotel at a bar or as a house-boy. He paid through an agency but they were not accredited with POEA and they took his money. He lost it to them – like a scam. When he went back to the agency its name had changed already. That is why it is my turn to try.*

Similarly, Tonnette says her husband "has thought about going overseas to work too but there is no job for him." Roe states, "My husband can't go [overseas] because there are no jobs for men – only for engineers and my husband is not an engineer. He is a farmer. But he doesn't want to go anyway." Cher's husband would also consider going abroad but cannot afford to pay his processing fees if he did find an unskilled job. Four of the participants have female relatives working/considering work overseas: Roe's sister is planning to go as an ODW: "My brothers do not want to go [overseas] but my sister wants to go. She is planning to go to Singapore as a domestic worker." Bella's sister-in-law works abroad as an ODW, Mia's sister-in-law hopes to work as an entertainer and Ta Ta's daughter is gong to work in Japan as an entertainer. Of the participants who have a close male relative overseas, Teri's ex-husband had gone to Kuwait and Cher's father-in-law is working in Malaysia.

Women's position in, and sense of responsibility to their family-households, their wish to work abroad for the purpose of meeting personal goals, the aggressive recruitment efforts by agencies for women OCWs due to the feminisation of the economy, and family-household migrant networks all influence women's choices to go overseas as ODWs. To further understand the gender differences the participants have alluded to, the patriarchal family-household ideology will be examined.

### (c). The patriarchal family-household ideology

The patriarchal family-household ideology, which places women in a subordinate position in the family-household, persists into the 21st century as the values and attitudes that legitimise and rationalise the *status quo* are instilled in each generation of children. Below are the most commonly referred to values and attitudes related to the patriarchal family-household ideology, which had been imparted to the participants when they were children.

1. The indisputable authority of, and respect and obedience to, elder family-household members, (although this was not limited to only male heads of households, especially if the male head of household had died then the female would command respect) as reflected in the following comments of various participants:
   Mia: "The important lesson I learned growing up was to have respect - to respect others, especially elders."
   Bella: "We must respect very much the old people."
   Val: "… I follow [my parents' wishes] because they are my parents. I cannot argue or say anything because [even though I don't agree with them] I think they know what is best. I think their purpose is for my own sake."

2. Husbands and wives have traditionally distinctly different roles in the family as seen in the following statements:
   Val: "If I settle down, get married I would devote my time to my kids… There would be no need to work. Money making is the husband's responsibility."
   Dawn: "I am not employed… My husband gives me an allowance. Husbands must do this."
   Ta Ta: "Women are the ones who budget for the needs of the family. The Filipino man just gives money to the wife." Ta Ta further elaborates on the roles husbands and wives have in Filipino society although she makes it clear she does not appreciate these societal expectations:

   > *With the Filipino attitude, the wives have to take care of the food, the clothes, the children, everything. I said, foreign men especially look after themselves, take care of their own clothes and things, but Filipinos no! You must prepare everything for*

> *the Filipino man. If I was married and we were both working... oh, how will I manage? For me marriage would be a hindrance, a burden. I would have to take care of my husband. Yeah! This Filipino attitude I do not like!*

3. Married women are seen as *pambahay lamang* (the English equivalent to the women's place is in the home).

   For example, Tonnette explains why it is necessary for a married woman to stay at home: "When I got married I stopped working and became a housewife. Why? Because a woman will have children."

   Bella similarly tells of her duty to stay home after marriage, even though she was bored and would have preferred to work outside the home:

   > *I resigned because I got married... It is difficult to be married and work [outside the home] so I resigned. My husband asked me to stay at home so ... I stayed at home and was a plain housewife [and] ... I take care of pigs for income.*

   Marcie was always interested in the entertainment business and wanted to become an actor. She got her children into a movie as extras and took them to auditions for other movie parts. She says: "I would go to the live entertainment show every Friday as a part of the live audience. I would take the kids with me. Even though I am a housewife and [should be] at home my husband was very kind to let me go."

4. Women's work in the household is not real work. This perception often surfaces in the conversations of the participants, viz:

   - Bella: "I stayed at home and was just a plain housewife."
     Cher: "I don't work now, I'm a housewife."
     Dawn: "I wasn't working [then] I was just a housewife".

Similarly, the next theme reflects the traditional role that some Filipino women aspire to.

5. Marriage is the life goal of girls/women. This common theme was expressed by these participants who are still single, including:

Delia: "I plan to get married and have kids. That is the plan for every Filipino. That is the ambition for all ladies who are working to be happily married and not working anymore."
Val: "Well, I always hoped to marry... Don't all women? I am praying God will give me the perfect husband."

Dawn, who has been married and divorced and now living with a common-law husband, makes this declaration: "As most young girls, I only dreamed to be a housewife with sufficient food. Not so many luxuries but a simply house, a happy home."

Again on the theme of the role of women in the family, the next value was expressed by a number of women:

6. To be wife and mother is the noblest calling for women and her self-sacrifices of personal desires, ambitions, and career for her children and husband are expected and necessary. This dimension of a patriarchal family-household ideology was clearly articulated by several participants such as:

Bella: "...Women take more responsibility for sending their children to school than fathers. They will do all they can for their children's education."
Tessy: "I needed to make sacrifices to earn money for my family. So many women go abroad because there are no jobs in the Philippines. How can we support our families if we have no jobs? This is the problem. We cannot support our families."
Mia: "In poor economic conditions it is the mothers that suffer most because they sacrifice for their families. A woman wants to help her family, so she goes abroad."
Ta Ta: "I tell wives who start a family, I say, it is not a problem if you work hard, have initiative, have hard labour and faith in God." She adds that she herself would have made the ultimate sacrifice and given up her own children to ensure their survival: "...I would have given all my children away just to see that they are in a good situation. Why should I let my children suffer just because I cannot provide for them?"

7. Women are the guardians of morality – a woman who has an extramarital affair is seen as a sinner yet to a married man's infidelity society turns a blind eye. This double standard seems to be accepted by a number of participants. For example,

Delia claims that when a woman is sexually assaulted or raped it is the responsibility of both the man and the woman. "Some [ODWs] are sexually assaulted, but that depends on the two people. No one can force a woman to have sex if she doesn't want to."

Likewise Marcie explains that if a woman is sexually assaulted or raped it is her fault because she was too nice or encouraged the man by her attire or attitude:

> *It is up to you how you will be treated by men. You must take care of yourself. Everywhere not just in Jeddah [Saudi Arabia], boys and men are hungry for sex. Also in the Philippines they [men] can easily catch you. You have to respect yourself and be careful of the way you dress and how you talk. If you end up in jail [in Saudi Arabia], like my friend they [male police officers] will do something to you, like rape or something. She was raped because she is so nice.*

Marcie adds:

> *Some Filipino women get into trouble when they are overseas. Some have a relationship with Filipino men and they want freedom. If they are caught they are sent back home. Of course Filipino men have affairs too but they are men.*

Val's married employer wanted to have an affair with her. She explains that she understood his "need":

> *...my employer [in Saudi Arabia] was a little bit courting me. He tells me he likes me... He is married...but he is a human being...I understand him because he is always quarrelling with his wife because she is not there that much and a man needs a woman.*

Teri's husband had a live-in mistress while Teri was working overseas. No one in her village wrote to tell her about it including her mother-in-law who was living in Teri's house with Teri's husband, mistress and son. She was told by her husband's other mistress in Singapore that Teri's husband was having an affair with someone else in the Philippines. Upon her return to the Philippines, Teri was willing to "forgive and forget" but separated because his second mistress in the Philippines beat her up in a jealous rage and her husband left her to work in Kuwait with his other mistress who had been living in Singapore.

Cher's difficulties in her community are a result of gossip based on speculation that she must have had an affair when she was overseas:

> *The people here gossip that I had a boyfriend and they do not accept this baby as my husband's. They say this baby is not my husband's because I was pregnant when I finally came back here. My husband came to get me from [a village] where I was staying since returning from Malaysia and brought me back [here]. It is difficult to live here because of people's gossip about me.*

All of the above "lessons" (with the exception of number one as it is not always just male elders that command respect and authority) are interconnected and reinforce the patriarchal family-household ideology perpetuating the subordination of females by males not just in the family-household but in society at large. Consequently, stereotypes of women as non-breadwinners, who have no relationship to the economy, and are solely wives/mothers (or eventually will become wives/mothers) who will interrupt their jobs to attend to their reproductive activities have resulted in the rationalisation of inequalities both inside and outside the home. In the home women and girls (whether they work outside the home or not) perform many hours of labour-intensive, monotonous and isolated household tasks which are taken for granted and 'valueless', a double burden for women employed outside the home or in income generating jobs inside the home. It is important to note that since the 1980s more women OCWs have become family breadwinners. Their substantive monetary contribution to their families, communities, and country's economy is widely recognised in Philippine society, yet despite this the stereotype of women as non-breadwinners persists.

## Analysis

### Family-Household moral imperatives

The importance of the family is clearly illustrated in the participants' narratives. Some of the moral imperatives that the participants highlight, which impacted on their decision to migrate are: A). A sense of responsibility, which is taken very seriously – called *pananagutan* in Filipino. It is because of the sense of *pananagutan* that parents will do whatever is necessary to provide their children with a good quality of life and an education.

It is behind many women's decisions to work overseas (ECMI, 1996). B). The authority of, and respect that must be given to elders and those in positions of authority, called *galang* is referred to in lesson number 1, section C. Children and younger members learn at an early age authority patterns – such as respecting and deferring to parents and elders within the family-household (Miralao, 1997). Bulatao (1970) asserts that this authority value extends outside the home so that Filipinos generally express a concern with what "important people", "authority figures and society" think of them thereby shaping their behaviours accordingly (p. 98-99). This authority value combined with the patriarchal family structure results in young (and oftentimes single) women's subordination within the family-household and in wider society. It ensures that women appear "meek and humble" (ECMI, 1986: 22) and obedient to elders' demands and suggestions, so that women's decisions to migrate can be influenced by elders. C). B*ayanihan,* which Bella discusses above "denotes team spirit, an atmosphere of unselfish co-operation, and a sharing of labour and spirit for the common good" (Steinberg, 1994: 23). According to Bella, *bayanihan* stimulates women's desire, as a "community member/family-household member", to work as ODWs so that they can contribute to the welfare of others. D). *Utang na loob* is perhaps one of the most important and influential values to the participants. Although, it was mentioned by only one participant, (Val) to describe her strong sense of indebtedness to her family and desire to pay back this "debt", it is evident that the other participants also live by this value. The social practice of "*utang na loob*" is an important part of the foundation of the kinship system (Billones & Wilson, 1987). It is a social practice embedded in a moral and ethical principle which expects a favour be returned (Almirol, 1985). The repayment of *utang* (a debt of gratitude) is ensured by *hiya* (a sense of shame) particularly if the debtor is unwilling to repay even though he/she may be able to.

Being labelled "*walang hiya*" or "*walang utang na loob*" is very serious when it occurs within the family-household. It indicates that he/she does not know how to honour and love his/her parents or siblings (Hollnsteiner, 1970). Vreeland *et al* (1976) contend that *utang na loob* is the most important interpersonal behaviour that provides a cohesive force in Philippine society. Hollnsteiner (1970) asserts that *utang na loob* reciprocity is designed to achieve security through interdependence between family and non-family members. *Utang* *na loob* reciprocity between parent and child is as Hollnsteiner describes "eternal and immeasurable" (72). Nothing a child does in his/her lifetime can repay the parent for giving him/her life and for raising him/her. Just as the younger sibling is everlastingly indebted to the older sibling for "letting the younger ones be born by being born first" (72).

Enrique (1994) offers an observation which suggests that *utang na loob* can be interpreted more positively than it has been in earlier interpretations, which have focussed more on the *utang* aspect (debt) and its repayment, rather than the *loob* (inner) dimensions. The *loob* dimension suggests a request by one person to another in the name of a shared inner self or a common humanity. He asserts that an inner *loob* complex of *dam dam* (feelings/sensing) and *kapwa* (a shared identity with fellow human beings) are central to Philippine values. To ignore these roots and emphasise only the social-interactional manifestations means deeper meanings are missed. He claims that *utang na loob* illustrates an inherent goodness and graciousness in humanity. However, I believe that regardless of whether the *loob* or the *utang* is highlighted it appears that both are vital parts in the reasons why *utang na loob* is so highly valued by the participants. Also, the outcome is the same – a continuous flow of reciprocal exchanges, which emphasise the importance of maintaining good interpersonal relationships with kin and others.

*Utang na loob* reciprocity is the social practice that participants in Brigham's (1995) study refer to in explaining their sense of obligation to remit a large portion of their monthly salary from Canada. This practice has a large bearing on why single participants felt the need to migrate to help support their parents and siblings. Although nothing was said outright, the desire to be financially helpful combined with a parent's hint or a friend's suggestion (and the fact that there are few well-paying jobs available in the country) is enough to spark the notion of migration as a way of contributing to the family-household. Married participants, in their role as family budgeters – a role which some claim puts women in a dominant position in the household, are burdened with the task of having to make do with less, forcing them to shoulder extra responsibilities such as income generating activities (Aguilar, 1988). As stated by the participants in "lesson number 6" - self-sacrificing is expected of women to make ends meet. Their sacrifices could take the form of eating last and the least once the family has been fed, giving up a career or tertiary education, working longer hours to supplement their family income and therefore sleeping less, migrating to another town to find work, or migrating overseas as ODWs. All of these sacrifices are contributing to women's psychological stress (IBON, 1993). Interestingly, the "sacrifice" of having to work outside the home or outside the country is not considered an affront to tradition "because it is for the sake of the family" (Eviota, 1995: 133).

### The good daughter

Half of the women are either the eldest children or the eldest daughters in their families [e.g. Val (eldest daughter), Mia, Teri, Roe, Dawn and Ta Ta are eldest children]. Tacoli (1996) maintains that in Filipino families, the eldest children, particularly unmarried daughters are expected to be responsible towards their parents and also their siblings. Other researchers claim that it is not just eldest daughters, but daughters in general or female members, such as single aunts who are also expected to sacrifice their personal desires and ambitions for nephews and nieces (cf. Honculada, 1994). Lim (1989) contends that while the ideology of parent-repayment is not limited to women, it is women who are more likely to adhere to it than men are. In agreement with this, Tacoli (1996) reports that women (single daughters and married mothers) have a stronger sense of commitment and obligation to their family-households and are more likely to send home a larger portion of their income than their male counterparts. Hart (1971) similarly states that daughters are more willing and faithful than sons in sharing their savings with the family. Trager (1991) declares that Filipino families rely on their daughters to supplement their income because traditionally, daughters maintain close contact with their families even after marriage. Parents often rely on daughters to be more obedient and less likely to spend money on themselves and send money home.

The degree of women's responsibility in striving for economic security of their family-household depends upon the women's age, marital and parental status and with whom they are living. A woman's obligation to family-household changes from the parental household to her new family after marriage (Chant and McIlwaine 1995), as was the case for Ta Ta and Roe (newly married). Ta Ta's mother had invested in Ta Ta's education but as soon as Ta Ta graduated from high school she got married and from then on her mother had no expectation for Ta Ta's remittances. Roe had sent all her earnings from overseas to her parents, but now that she is married she will send her earnings to her new husband and save for her future family. And in the same way that single women have a sense of responsibility to their parental family, wives and mothers have a strong sense of responsibility to their (future) children. This is evident by the statements made about their main priorities by participants who are married with children. Their priorities are to educate their children and gain some reprieve from poverty.

But why do women make [are expected to make] sacrifices for the sake of their families; what is it that makes the participants feel that sense of responsibility to their families?; what is it that makes them "brave", "fighters", "the responsible ones", the ones who "plan for life", the "family budgeters", and "more mature than men"? Analysing the patriarchal family structure is helpful in understanding the gender differences.

## The Patriarchal Structure of the Family-Household

In the Philippines, family values emphasise that all members must sacrifice for the sake of the family (Vreeland *et al*, 1970; Bulato, 1970), yet a specific expectation for additional self-sacrificing is placed on women – mothers, wives, daughters, sisters (Alcantara, 1996; Tacoli, 1996; Honculada, 1994; Trager, 1991; Harbison, 1984; Vreeland *et al*, 1970; Bulato, 1970). The participants support this expectation in their statements about lessons learned and in their explanations of why more women than men migrate.

As a socialising unit the family internalises social norms and values. Two important values supporting the patriarchal family structure, which participants Delia, Dawn and Val describe are that marriage is the life goal of girls/women, while Bella, Tessy, Mia and Ta Ta declare that to be wife and mother is the noblest calling for women. Israel-Sobritchea (1990) reiterates that the desire to have children is "one of the most important cultural values of Filipinos" (p. 15). Marriage is the "necessary first step" for a woman as it ascribes legal status to a woman and her children. The aspiration of becoming wife and mother requires a life time of preparation to become an "ideal woman in Philippine society" (Israel-Sobritchea, 1990: 15), which is:

> … someone who is willing to forego her personal development and, if necessary, suffer all kinds of hardship for the sake of her children and spouse. She is also someone who is kind, hardworking, loving, neat and always supportive of the plans and aspirations of her husband (Israel-Sobritchea, 1990: 15).

Angeles (1994) makes the point that while marriage and motherhood appear to be a fulfilling option for women, they require that women find (and keep) husbands who are willing to support them and their children. Which leads to the next "lesson" participants refer to – women are the guardians of morality. Honculada (1994) reminds us that the role of both Church and State is to keep women's virtue intact with codes that circumscribe her sexuality and reproductive rights. In marriage vows women are asked to love, honour, and 'submit yourself to your husband' while the man is not asked to obey his wife but to simply 'love your wife'. Furthermore an unmarried woman with an "illegitimate" child "is faulted for not having defended her virtue from male sexual desires" (Honculada, 1994: 90). Marcie and Val illustrate their belief in the "double standards" of morality. In summary, they say that if both unwed and married men act on their strong sexual desires (outside of marriage) they are not to be faulted for "naturally" "needing" a woman. Since "boys and men are hungry for sex" (as Marcie says) it is up to women to protect their virtue by attending to the way they dress and talk and resisting rape. De Leon (1987 cited in Israel-Sobritchea, 1990) believes that this attitude is developed as a result of women failing to meet the criteria of an "ideal woman", which leads women to "self-flagellate" - taking the blame for their own misfortunes such as abuse or rape.

Within the family, as in the social world, gender is a major principle for shaping the unequal power dynamics. Gender relationships determine the appropriate roles males and females play in the household's productive and reproductive work, "shapes their kinship rights and obligations, and encourages the sense of affinity and dependence of women" (Harbison, 1981 cited in Lim, 1995: 43). The division of responsibilities in the home is usually framed around the notion of "private" or "domestic sphere" and "public sphere" – a distinction which rests on the function of women to bear children (Illo, 1995). Therefore, the "natural" ideal family described by participants Val, Dawn, Ta Ta, Bella, Tonnette, and Marcie is of wife/mother at home and husband/father working outside the home for a wage to support the family. The belief in the norm that husbands and wives have distinctly different roles in the family, that women's place is in the home, and that women's work is not real work are three "lessons" which reflect the sexual division of labour.

To do their wifely/womanly duties participants Teri, Dawn, Bella, and Tonnette gave up their jobs and Marcie and Ta Ta gave up their tertiary education as soon as they married so they could be homemakers with the expectation they would soon have children, which they did. Although the married women expressed their belief in the ideal family with its sexual division of labour, the reality of their lives and for many Filipino families is that with a decrease in real incomes more families require more than one "breadwinner". According to Angeles (1994) women are not leaving their jobs after marriage and are likely to engage in other income generating activities to supplement the family income. Rosca (2000) claims that in their subordinated unequal position in the family-household, women are not only responsible for the replenishment of labour and all associated housework, they are responsible for the economic survival of their families. Participants Cher, Tessy, Teri, Ta Ta, Dawn, and Bella went/returned to work outside the home while their children were still under the age of five. Cher's, Teri's, and Dawn's first jobs outside the home after marriage were as ODWs. Ta Ta, Bella, and Tessy also started /returned to college after marriage and having children. Tessy never stopped working – she only took time off to have her children and Roe, who just recently married is leaving shortly to work as an ODW again.

For the participants over age 40, women's liberation in recent years has changed their attitude about the distinct separation in male and female roles, as Tonnette stated, "[women] want their own money…"; Marcie said, "…Filipinas have equal rights now…"; and Ta Ta declared, "These days both the husband and the wife are working". Perhaps as Ta Ta suggests if women her age were working outside the home in 1970 they would have been 'going against the grain' but in present day and in the future there are/will be far more choices for women than housework/stay-at-home-motherhood. Indeed, unlike some Asian countries, in the Philippines the public sphere is now open to women as well as men (Asis, 1995). Women are "social equals" to men (Jacobson, 1974, cited in Asis, 1995:223) as indicated by women's equal access to education and occupational opportunities (Castillo, 1977). However, having said that these participants' attitudes have changed, they along with Dawn, Bella, Cher, Delia and Val still hold the view that marriage and women's roles in the patriarchal family structure are exemplary and although Ta Ta does not agree with these views she believes these ideals are inevitable for her generation. In a similar vein, Barber (1997) found that although her women university students in the Philippines

> ...described their culturally based understandings that as women they were expected to get married and devote themselves to serving their husbands and other members of their families, whilst maintaining a neat, peaceful, well-run household (p.43),

where self was actualised through meeting the needs of others, many contradictions were exposed. This "stereotypical pastiche of martyred Philippine femininity" (p.43) was not the way the women actually lived their lives, but they believe that other women do follow more closely the prescribed norms of Philippine culture.

### Negotiating the decision to migrate

Although it is often concluded that women migrate because they are coerced by family-household members as "a strategy for family survival", this is not the case for the participants, with the exception of Ta Ta. Only Ta Ta stated that family-household members told her (directly) to migrate. During her third migration (to Malaysia), Ta Ta's sister and her mother had made the decision for her ("...this is not my decision.... I did not want to go but they were the ones to encourage me..."). Participants did not indicate that they were coerced and in fact state that for whatever their reasons, they initiated the discussion of migration with their family-households. Riley & Gardener (1993) in their study of prospective migrants in Ilocos Norte concluded that there is little difference between the number of men or women planning to migrate internationally on the basis of their own desires (although women are more likely than men to migrate within the country because of the desires of others). For participants Delia, Marcie, Tonnette, Val, and Ta Ta (during her first and second migration) who migrated in part on the basis of their own desires their debt repayment and their families' debt of gratitude to them for the remittances they provide help them cope with feelings of guilt for going abroad for "selfish" reasons. These "selfish" reasons may include for example, travelling for their own desire to "see something of the world" (Ta Ta) or "find a husband" (Val).

Although the participants initiated the discussion of migration, they were still required to negotiate their decision with their family-households and some still saw their migration as an act of self-sacrificing. In their role as family budgeters – a role which some claim in one way puts women in a dominant position in the household - women are burdened with the task of having to make do with less, forcing them to shoulder extra responsibilities such as income generating activities (Aguilar, 1988). As stated by the participants in "lesson number 6" - self-sacrificing is expected of women to make ends meet. Their sacrifices could take the form of eating last and the least after the family has been fed, giving up a career or education, working longer hours to supplement their family income and therefore sleeping less, migrating to another town to find work, or migrating overseas as ODWs.

For Ta Ta and Val migrating for the sake of the family was only one aspect of their reason for going abroad, but it was their first response to the question, "What led you to migrate?" Perhaps, as Tacoli (1996: 18) suggests women are more likely to state that they moved for the sake of the family rather than for their own benefit because they are "reflecting normative expectations of gender". About this manner of ODWs' explanation, Tacoli (1996: 18) states that: "…migration is the outcome of far more complex processes than income maximizing or risk minimizing household strategies, … it is informed by processes of negotiation between individuals within the framework of their normative roles." Cheng (1999) reminds us that gender dynamics within the family-household dictate the negotiations that take place among the members of different sexes and generations.

Except for Mia who was living on her own, all the other participants as wives, mothers, daughters, sisters or niece negotiated their decision to migrate within the family-household. As we see by the participants' narratives, these negotiations are determined by the ODWs' gender, generation and the households' "income, size and stage of the developmental cycle" (Tacoli, 1996: 18). For example, Marcie, Tonnette, Bella and Ta

Ta are in their forties and have three to five children of similar ages (teenagers/ early twenties). Their children are all either attending high school or (going to attend) college which makes more demands on the family income. These women feel that they have bargaining power in their households - a finding supported by Tacoli (1996) who states that mothers' over forty similarly have more bargaining power in their households than younger mothers. The women used their bargaining power to negotiate with/convince their families that they should migrate. By explaining the advantages of the monetary gains from remittances and reiterating their financial needs, the women were successful in getting their families to agree.

Participants note that having another family-household member on their side helped the negotiation process along. For example, Bella and Ta Ta negotiated their decision with their sister-in-law's/sister's strong interventions, while Ta Ta herself is playing an active role in encouraging her daughter's family to let her migrate, mainly so that the daughter can escape marital discord and physical abuse. This is a common reason for women migrating (Morokvasic, 1980).

Participants who were single and childless at the time of migrating (Roe, Delia, Val and Mia) came from families where the number of children ranged from five to thirteen. The participants were in their teens or twenties when they went overseas. At the time of migrating their siblings had not completed their schooling and income was required to finance their education. Val's, Roe's and Delia's parents agreed with their requests to migrate mainly because they were single, a reason Bella clearly agrees with as she declares, "I would actively discourage married women from migrating. For single women it is easier to go. It is very different for single women."

These participants make it clear that their parents/other household-members had the final say in their request for migration. This is a perception confirmed by Tacoli (1996) who elaborates that for young, unmarried daughters in their teens and twenties, the individual decisions to migrate, for how long, how much, if any, personal savings they can accumulate, as well as if and when they marry are constrained by familial obligations. A study on Filipino migrants to Canada (Philippine Women's Centre of BC, 2000) concludes that feudal and patriarchal beliefs and attitudes prevalent in Filipino families impact on the women participants' choice to migrate, but especially on the younger women and those from rural areas who held a subordinate position in the family and were subject to strict(er) family controls.

### Social networks and Recruitment

It is evident that all of the participants migrated as a direct or indirect result of social networks, which support migration from their communities. Four of the participants have relatives working abroad. Through an informal network of kinship and community networks participants were informed of migration possibilities and were supported in their choices to migrate either by other migrants finding them overseas jobs and/or by financing their migration. The network has been most supportive of female migration for two reasons. Firstly, the demand for workers in feminised occupations has become very much feminised – specifically ODWs and entertainers, and it is this demand that has shaped the migration flow of these workers (Abella, 1990). Secondly, women are more likely to rely on social networks for information and assistance than men, which may in turn be more effective than the formal social groups to which men belong (Foner, 1986).

Massey *et al* (1987) elaborate on the importance of these networks. They state that international migration that occurs in communities originates historically in transformations of social and economic structures in sending and receiving societies and once begun migrant social networks grow and develop. These networks support and channel migration on a continually widening scale so that migration takes on its own logic and internal dynamic and fuels itself. When migrants take loans from friends and relatives the loans are usually interest-free as the borrower is expected to find a job for and finance the migration of another friend or relative. Family-households, which have not sent a member overseas are aware of the material gains of migrants and their families and are influenced to consider migration. It is in these ways that the networks result in a snowball effect of out-migration.

### Capitalism and the sexual division of labour

The sexual division of labour within the family-household is discussed above, but Cheng (1999) reminds us that unequal power relationships are not confined within the home, they are carried over into the other wider contexts. Cheng (1999: 42) explains:

> The patriarchal system, which dictates the unequal power relationship between men and women, has interacted with the process of capitalist intervention and determined the differential impact on the sexes depending on their relative positions and power within the larger socio-economic contexts.

Under capitalism, women are "super-exploited" because they perform unpaid labour in the home and are categorised as a reserve army of cheap labour depending upon the changing needs of the capitalist system (Cheng, 1999; Angeles, 1990). The reserve army of labour creates competition among workers resulting in lower wages and increased profits for capitalists. As men and women are segregated to certain types of jobs, with women usually concentrated in jobs most vulnerable to booms and busts, competition for men's jobs by women is limited. This keeps wages for men's jobs higher than women's, while at the same time the reserve army of labour cheapens men's labour. In the workplace this ideology places women in a disadvantageous position. As Angeles (1994) summarises, women in the workplace are:

1) more likely to be paid less than their male counterparts;
2) less likely to have tenure security;
3) less likely to be given technological training;
4) more likely to experience labour-displacement due to technological changes;
5) more likely to be put in non-managerial positions or kept away from positions of authority;
6) classified as less skilled or less competent;
7) kept out of jobs which are deemed inappropriate for women (i.e. those jobs which are not an extension of women's nurturing and supportive role);
8) more likely to have poorer work conditions;
9) more likely to experience sexual harassment on the job and;
10) less likely to be promoted.

Women's unequal position through the sexual division of labour has taken on a new dimension as it merges with the international division of labour. The migration of labour has become increasingly feminised with women concentrated in gendered occupations, such as domestic work, which indicates the sexual segregation of migrant labour force at the international level. In later chapters we will see how gender ideology shapes the ODWs' experiences within the context which they are employed.

## Conclusion

This chapter explored two closely linked influential factors, which impacted on the participants' decision to migrate – the economic situation of the participants and the family-household system.

The women's economic circumstances revealed that unemployment, underemployment, low salaried jobs, poor working conditions, and low family incomes (that can be classified as subsistence poor) are highly influential in 'pushing' the women into migration. Behind these individual economic circumstances is the weak Philippine economy -with high inflation (peaked at 6.9 percent in January 2001), high unemployment (a rate of 11.4 percent), and high level of poverty (37 percent of the population are living below the poverty line) (World Bank, 2001; Philippine Census, 2001). The Philippine government's attempt to attain NIC status through a program of rapid industrialisation has had a negative impact on women – two examples of which are provided by participants Bella and Val, decentralisation and heavy reliance on foreign investment. Decentralisation of social services from national government to local government units resulted in lower wages for service providers such as midwives. The reliance on foreign investment means that although TNCs such as DOLE and Philippine Foods have provided local jobs, these jobs are often low-waged and casual/contractual leaving workers, mostly women workers, without worker protection or job security.

The overseas demand for workers in feminised occupations and the wage disparity between the participants' jobs in the Philippines and ODW jobs in the receiving countries are additional "pulling" factors.

The participants make it clear that the family-household system is of utmost importance to them in all aspects of their lives including their decision to migrate. However, they warn not to assume that women are coerced into migration by their family-household members. Pressure to migrate comes from the women's family-households' economic circumstances: The need to contribute (more) to the family-household income because there is no one else in the family-household able to so. For the single mothers, their ex-husbands had abandoned the family-household, leaving the survival of the family entirely to them. In a sense then this may be construed as indirect coercion to migrate. The participants' need to financially contribute to their family-households, combined with the women's strong sense of values; their attributes, such as being healthy, educated, having courage, a "fighting spirit" and a "helpful heart"; and their personal desires to travel/work abroad inspired the women to begin their negotiations of migration with their family-household members.

The Filipino values of *pananagutan, galang, bayanihan,* and *utang na loob* are four moral imperatives that are held in great esteem by both men and women. The participants indicate that women family-household members, being more reliable and responsible than men, are more likely to practice *pananagutan* and *utang na loob*. Gender relations within the family-household shape unequal power dynamics between male and female members. Participants explain through examples how these inequalities are played out through the sexual division of labour at various stages of the family-household development cycle (e.g. young single daughter, older single daughter, young married wife/mother, older married wife/mother, single mother). Sexist ideologies (held by participants and society in general) force men and women to conform to sexist stereotypes, such as the male "breadwinner" and the female homemaker, and endure double standards for male morality. Interestingly, some participants see their becoming the family-household "breadwinner" through migration an expression of their rejection of sexist stereotypes, while others felt their migration was necessary for economic reasons but still commend the "ideal" traditional husband/wife roles. Indeed the "ideal" traditional family is becoming less of an option for the lower classes as family-households require two "breadwinners" to make ends meet. For the middle and upper classes a full-time "housewife" is a symbol of affluence (Angles, 1994). Sexist stereotypes result in greater expectations that women will make the necessary sacrifices for their families. These sacrifices include giving up job/career or education as soon as married, working longer hours in the home to make ends meet, migrating/leaving family to work elsewhere and remitting large portions of salary to family-households from abroad rather than spending it on themselves.

One of the most common priorities of the participants was to finance the education of family members (children and siblings). Payment of school fees was cited by five of the participants as one of their main financial needs, which influenced their decision to migrate. School fees are paid at both public and private institutions but private institutions demand a much higher fee. Investment in schooling (public or private) is seen by the participants as a wise investment in their families' 'human capital' as the chances of better jobs supposedly improves for those with higher education. Although most of the participants wanted their family members to attain a level of education at public institutions one participant (Marcie) specifically wanted her children to receive private school education. This, she and others stress (in the earlier part of the chapter) is much more likely to result in better jobs and greater societal recognition than public school education. Marcie and her husband were determined that if Marcie were to migrate a large portion of the remittances should be spent on the private education of their sons. However, as it became obvious that the remittances would not meet the educational needs of three boys in expensive private schools two were withdrawn and put back into less expensive public college. Marcie makes it clear that her "investment" in her eldest son's "prestigious" engineering degree reflects her and her husband's aspirations for exchange mobility and their desire to increase their family's intellectual capital in the next generation.

Within the family-household context, negotiations for the women's migration were determined by the age and stage of the household's developmental cycle, with older (past age 40) "married-with-children-over-age-15" participants having more bargaining power than younger and/or single counterparts. Negotiations were always made within the framework of their normative roles as good dutiful daughters/mothers.

# Chapter Five: The Pre-departure Stage: Education and its impact on ODW migration

## Introduction

This chapter examines the participants' formal, informal and non-formal educational experiences from childhood to the point of departure for overseas domestic work. Such experiences are analysed to show how they may have influenced the participants' decisions to migrate and further the degree to which they provided the participants with knowledge and skills that will be helpful to their work abroad.

During the Spanish colonial period, Filipino women were clearly largely excluded from the advantages of formal schooling, especially higher levels. However, with the coming of the Americans an era of universal education and university education for Filipino women commenced (Camagay, 1995). Since then formal education has become highly valued in Philippine society with most parents striving at great costs to themselves to educate their children because education is seen as the main way of improving one's economic situation and gaining the individual student and his/her family-household social recognition (Bulatao, 1970). Women make up the majority of students at the secondary and tertiary level of education. All of the participants in this study were able to attain their high school diploma and some their college degrees despite barriers such as poverty and distance from secondary and tertiary educational institutions. The participants underscore two main factors that influenced decisions about their formal education under the formal education section, which in turn played a role in their decision to migrate. These are their socioeconomic background and the influences of the elder family-household members.

Informal educational experiences played a large role in initially sparking in the participants' minds the idea of migration. As women have been migrating in increasing numbers over the past 20 years migration has "become entrenched in the ideological fabric of gendered Filipino culture" (Barber, 1997: 45). Participants felt that informal education was also the most effective means of learning some of their pre-departure information. Under the informal education section participants describe these experiences.

The main focus under the nonformal education section is on the Pre-departure Orientation Seminars (PDOS), which all legally hired ODWs are required to take. PDOS provides the main opportunity for (potential) ODWs to access vital information that will help prepare them for their overseas job experience. However, participants explain that there are limitations to how useful these seminars are plus there are weaknesses with the way existing PDOSs are conducted. Participants comment on their experiences with PDOS and they and NGO leaders suggest what must be done to improve the seminars.

### Formal Education

In this section I address the ways in which the formal education system, from grade school to college affects out-migration. To begin I explore the participants' formal educational experiences as they are affected by the social and cultural context of the family-household. Following this I will look at informal and non-formal educational influences.

### The effects of poverty on education:

A common theme that emerged from the participants' narratives on education was how poverty affected their formal educational experiences. Eleven of the twelve participants described their economic background as "poor" while living at their parental family-household, yet eight were able to attend college (seven completed their degrees). In section (a) participants with college degrees explain how they were able to go to college despite their poverty and how this education impacted on their life choices, including their decision to go overseas. Section (b) details the experiences of the participants who did not go on to college but completed high school.

### (a.) College educated participants

Delia grew up in a "lower class" "poor" family. However, her parents made every effort to finance Delia's education at a private catholic primary (grade 1 to 6) school and then at a "a not so expensive" public high school and agricultural college. In her words, "There was no choice. My parents couldn't afford to send me to any other school". Not all of Delia's nine elder and three younger siblings were able to go through school and college. She was in a sense "selected" to get tertiary education by her parents perhaps based on her good primary and secondary school performance. Having a college degree enabled her to go overseas to help to improve her family's condition and fund her siblings' education.

Val was educated at "a prestigious catholic missionary school" with the help of her extended family (grandfather who owned a school and aunts who were teachers) as well as her parents. Not all of Val's five elder and five younger siblings attended school (although with Val's help three of her siblings are now attending/ have just completed secondary or tertiary schooling). Like Delia, Val was selected by her family-household members to go on to college because she showed academic promise but also because she is the eldest female in the family (her five elder siblings are all boys). She declares because of the spirit of *utang na loob*, knowing that her family's sacrifice allowed her to graduate from a four year college course, she feels it is her responsibility to help support her mother and finance her siblings' college education. This was one of the driving forces behind wanting to migrate overseas.

Dawn's private high school and college education was financed by her aunt (a single woman who did sewing for a living). Dawn's six younger siblings were also educated, but not in private schools and some not beyond grade six. Although Dawn received a good education and found a job as a midwife, a higher salaried job, which would support her family was not forthcoming.

Bella was educated in six different public schools before going on to do her college degree. With her father's career in the military, Bella felt that growing up her family was economically stable. Her parents financed her college education as well as that of her siblings. During her midwife job at the hospital she took courses toward a Bachelor of Science in Elementary Education (BSc.Ed). She explains:

> *I started a BSc.Ed (a Bachelor of Science in Elementary education) when I was working at the hospital. For three years I took courses. I was a working student. I did not finish although my sister is encouraging me to go back to college. I needed only 18 more units and practice teaching and I would have completed. But later*

> *[after other jobs and marriage] the temptation for going overseas was stronger so I went to Hong Kong instead of completing my degree.*

After she was married and had children, money became a concern to her, especially when she and her husband went into debt as a result of a business venture. Her salary as a midwife was not enough to sustain her family's needs and migration became an attractive option.

Tessy is a participant whose education was affected by her family's finances. She attended the local public primary and secondary school in her village, but in her third year of high school she had to drop out because her family could not afford for her to continue. She migrated to Manila where she worked as a domestic helper for a year. Then with financial help from her uncle she returned home to finish high school. Because of a lack of money Tessy believed she would never go to college, however, two sources provided her with the necessary financial assistance to attend:

> *I studied hard at school. After fourth year high school, my classmates went to college and I wanted [to go] also but we had no money. Because we had no money I took an exam and if you pass this exam you will be recommended for a scholarship based on your scores. You know our Vice President Joseph Estrada? He is the one who helped us because he has a programme, you know? It's a programme for the poor - those young ones who have no money but want to finish their studies. Together with LULA (La Union Ladies Association) they helped me pay for the tuition fees. My parents also helped me and they encouraged me.*

Tessy emphasises that the poor are "disadvantaged" in their lives because they cannot afford to complete their primary or high school education or go on to college unless they are fortunate enough to get a scholarship. To her, it was "extremely frustrating" that she was still living in poverty without a permanent teaching job having worked so hard to get her teaching degree as well as completing all the courses for a master's degree. To her being college educated and working as an ODW is the way it is for many Filipino women like her. As she puts it, "How can women, educated or not support their families if they have no jobs?" Additionally she states that having a degree helped her get hired as an ODW. "I waited only one month and then I went right away. ...[Recruiters] look for people who have degrees and they see I have a degree already."

Teri is another participant who, despite her poverty was able to go to college with the help of a scholarship after graduating from public primary and high school. She attended college in San Fernando where she did a two year secretarial course. She explains: "I had a scholarship so I could take all the courses. The tuition fee was high, but we had allowances. When I studied I was working half day too to pay for my other expenses." After marrying Teri found herself still living in poverty despite having received an education and having worked for three years. However, she notes that her education helped to get her ODW job – the job she had hoped would help pull her family out of poverty.

Ta Ta's family lived in poverty because her father was a gambling addict, yet she attended a public elementary school and a private high school. This she was able to do only because her mother made sacrifices. Ta Ta elucidates:

> *When I attended the private high school - that was 1964 to 1969, I paid tuition fees. I paid three pesos a month. By the time I graduated it was five pesos. Actually, my mother could not afford [to pay my tuition school fees] so she took in laundry. Yes. Other people's dresses just to earn money, because my father was irresponsible. I was the eldest, so I took my sisters and brothers and we had to sell coconuts and vegetables in the market because my father wasn't responsible and we needed money for school...*

After high school Ta Ta was not able to go to college because of an early marriage: "I married at an early age of 17.... Immediately after 1970 after I finished high school I got married and then I got one child but unfortunately he died. After two years again I got another one..."

Later when she was a single mother Ta Ta attended college where she took Commerce but after nearly two years she had to drop out because of the demands of her growing children who were all in school:

> *I attended the University of Mindanao.... You know I took college when I was working at the post office in 1982. So in 1983 I had to quit because my children were growing up. By that time my husband and I were separated already, in 1979. I was a single mother at that time. I really longed to continue my studies but the situation did not allow me to continue.*

Ta Ta was never able to find employment that would adequately cover her family's living expenses so migration seemed her best option.

Although Marcie grew up in a home that "didn't have a lot of money", her parents ensured that she and her three siblings went through the public school system. She continued on to do a two year college secretarial course, which she financed as a "self-supporting working student" with some help from her parents. Although she had originally planned to continue her studies in accounting, she dropped out. She did not finish because in her third year, she "eloped with my husband". Since getting married and having children Marcie has been determined her now teen-aged children should attend a private school and college "superior" to the ones she attended.

> *I want my kids to get the best education at private schools. ... I wanted my eldest son, [who] is very studious to go to a prestigious engineering college, so he is at Mapua. It is as prestigious as La Salle or Ateneo in engineering. My sister helped support him. I want all my kids to finish their studies and be more educated than me.*

These goals are the main reasons behind her decision to go abroad.

**(b.) Non-college educated participants**

While living at home, Mia was denied a basic education because she was needed to help on the farm and also because her parents did not have sufficient money to pay for her school fees. As a young girl, Mia had hoped to become a lawyer, but her dream never came to fruition because of lack of money and encouragement from her family. Indeed she got a high school diploma only because of her determination, self-initiative and willingness to take risks. She ran away from home and worked for her room and board as a domestic worker in the daytime and attended school at night. Mia explains:

> *I liked school. That's why I ran away from home because I could not go to school [when I lived] at home. At seven years old I started working. I only went two times a week to school because I had to work to help my family. From grade four to six I had to plant rice. We had no land. My mother sold native foods to make money. Our income was not enough for me to go to school [so] when I was 11 years old I ran away from home and got a job working as a housemaid. I worked in the daytime and*

> *went to school at night. My parents did not know I went there. Somebody told me there was a job at this place. The other maid was transferring to another place. The former maid at this place helped me get the job and she told me how to get there by jeepney. It was a jeepney trip of two hours. It was only after I was already 15 years old I revisited my parents.*

Mia explains that the arrangement was a good one because she got what she wanted – an opportunity to attend and graduate from public high school and she was treated well by her employers.

> *... my employers were in their early 40's and had no children so they treated me like their own [child]. The school I went to was a big public school. .... I received paper and pencils from my employer... I did not receive a salary from them. I took all the subjects: science, history, English... It was all useful to me.*

She states that her situation is not unusual, but if possible girls should find other means to get an education because it is not good to be raised away from your family:

> *It is common practice for young girls to work as housemaids in other people's homes at an early age. I would not recommend it to other young girls whose parents cannot afford their education, but maybe she will have to do it if there is no other way [but] she should find another way.*

After Mia graduated she wanted to get a job, but away from her home province: "I would go out of the province even if I had a job because I wanted to learn more."

She believes her life would have been different had she stayed at home and received an education because she could have been more help to her family.

A chain of events led Mia to her overseas job - starting with running away at age 11, working as a maid in the village, moving to the city to work with the employer's nephew, being recruited by the boarding house owner, and then being trafficked by an illegal recruiter. Mia links poverty and the lack of education with the illegal migration of women. She declares:

> *Maybe it's the government's fault women go abroad illegally and have bad experiences because if [the government] provides basic education for the poor children and secondary education for the youth, we can find a better job and a better life, but the government does not do anything for the poor... It's the same problem for our children [when we have children ourselves].*

Cher comes from a rural farming family, which was able to provide public secondary school education for her and two of her three brothers. She asserts that she did not go on to college mainly because she did not have the ability or desire to do so, but additionally money to pay for tertiary education would have been hard to find. She feels that because of her lack of tertiary education she was not able to secure a job that paid well in the Philippines and hence her only option was to migrate as an ODW. "I have a high school diploma but it does not help at all in getting a job in the Philippines [and] I had no choice [but] to go to Malaysia... The recruiter did not care that I only had high school [education]."

Tonnette, like Mia was not able to go to college because her family could not afford to send her and she did not receive scholarship funding. When she was younger she dreamed of going to college after completing her public schooling and it is because of this she feels very strongly about supporting her children in their tertiary education. It was, in her words, "my dream. I wanted to take commerce at college but it did not come true because I was too poor when I was single. Anyway my oldest daughter is finishing accounting." She declares that the only way for her children to avoid poverty is for them to have college degrees. To help them achieve their college education she states she must work overseas as an ODW to earn "enough money for all the children to finish school and college."

Roe could not go to college because of a lack of money: "I wanted to go to college, and take education but my mother said there is no money. I really wanted to be a teacher because I like to teach children." She explains what she did instead: "I attended vocational school. After high school I went to Manila and lived with my auntie. It was a public vocational school and it was cheap. It only cost 20 pesos for six months. I got a diploma after six months." With this qualification she secured a job as a factory worker. However, she could not stay at this job long term because of the poor working conditions and low pay. She felt migration as an ODW was her best option to help her siblings finish their schooling.

### Analysis

The participants' narratives illustrate how the problems of the formal education system impacted on their educational experiences. They describe how because of poverty, and to a lesser extent because of the region in which they grew up, the quality of education they received was limited, as well as the college course of study they selected. In two cases (Mia and Tessy), poverty was the direct cause of their dropping out of school although both of them were able to resume with the help of someone outside of their immediate families. In Mia's case, poverty restricted her access to basic education while living at home.

The participants' struggles and their families' sacrifices to give them an education are made more difficult by the government's failure to follow through with its commitment to public education. As mentioned in Chapter one, the vision of the Medium-Term Development Plan (MTPDP), popularly known as *Philippines 2000* was for the Philippines to become a newly industrialised country (NIC) by the year 2000. One of the goals is to improve the quality of life for Filipino people through "people empowerment", which calls for the development of human resources. This requires among other things increasing the investment in human capital through education and training (DECS, 2001). Additionally, the Philippines government committed itself to the goal of the United Nation's programme, "Education for All" (EFA) signed in Jomtien, Thailand in 1990, which aims to universalise primary education and massively reduce illiteracy by 2000. In 2000 the Philippines reaffirmed their commitment to EFA by 2015 at the World Education Forum in Dakar, Senegal (UNESCO, 2000). Moreover, since 1990 the total public expenditure on public education expressed as a percentage of the total government's expenditure increased by 7 percent bringing it to 17.6 percent by 1996 (UNESCO, 2000). Expressed as a percentage of GNP, the total public expenditures on education increased from 2.9 percent of GNP in 1990 to 3.2 percent of GNP in 1996 (UNESCO, 2000). The government's commitments to EFA and the education goals of the MTPDP demonstrate that dominant policies of modernisation and globalisation emphasised a human capital outreach, mainly preparing a population that is functionally literate and a trained work force that can contribute to the economy.

As regards the literacy rate, it is evident that in fifty years the number of illiterates has fallen substantially for the population 15 and older as a whole and has also fallen for females. For example, in 1950 40 percent of the population 15 years and older was illiterate (36 percent for men and 44 percent for women), while in 1990 only 6 percent of the population 15 and older was illiterate (7 percent for men and 6 percent for women). In 1997 (the latest numbers available) 5.4 percent of the population 15 and older was illiterate (5.2 for males and 5.7 for females) (UNESCO, 2000). But despite governmental commitments and the improvement in the literacy rate, the participants' experiences highlight the divide between youths' access to education depending on their region. Their experiences are reflected in statistics, which indicate that the Philippines' economically depressed regions and rural areas are not benefiting from public education in the same way as other parts of the country. These areas[1] have the lowest functional and simple literacy rates in the country. Furthermore, the number of out-of-school youth (OSY) (in the age range of 7 to 24 years) is also highest in the economically depressed regions and rural areas. The number of OSY increased over a five year period from 1989 to 1994 from 3.0 million to 3.8 million, with females out numbering males by 6.7 percentage points (Philippine Census, 2001). In addition to these education problems the UNESCO World Education Report 2000 summarises that little progress has been made over the past decade in achieving the EFA goals for people in poor, rural and remote communities, as well as for ethnic minorities and indigenous populations. With respect to education of the female Filipino school aged population there are fewer female enrolees at the elementary level and more females than males who have never gone to school (David, 1996), yet at the secondary level this trend is reversed (UNESCO, 2000).

Some of the problems with the formal education system are highlighted by the head of the Bureau of Formal Education (BFE), who states that poverty and inefficiency in the formal education system are responsible for functional illiteracy (Torres, 1993). Correspondingly, DECS claims that the high illiteracy rates in certain provinces, namely the poorer ones, are due to the fact that 27 percent of the country's *barangays* have no elementary schools. Moreover, 35 percent of the country's elementary schools are "incomplete", meaning they offer only primary not intermediate education (Sandique, 1993). Due to a teacher shortage the average number of high school students in a class is 75, while the official cap of a classroom is set at 55 – increased by 15 in a bid to accommodate new enrolees. In the National Capital Region (NCR) alone, there is a shortage of 9,896 principals and 6,000 teachers at the elementary and secondary levels (Torres, 1993).

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[1] The regions which have the highest illiteracy rate in the country are the ARMM region, followed by the regions of central Visayas, Western Visayas, and Southern Mindanao (Philippine Census, 2001).

All but two participants in this study are from rural backgrounds, yet they were able to complete their secondary schooling and eight attended colleges (although one did not complete her undergraduate studies) despite the fact that there were no tertiary educational institutions in their local areas. For seven of the participants, this required migrating to an urban area to live nearer to the college/school. One lived at home but travelled daily by jeepney between home and college. Hence room, board and transportation costs from home to the city were additional costs on top of tuition fees, textbooks, school supplies, etc. These expenses were an additional strain on already stretched family budgets, which resulted in part in families not being able to send more than one child or a few children for further education.

The college-educated participants explain by example strategies that were employed which enabled them to attend college despite their poverty. Extended family support is one example. Dawn's aunt supported her entire education, Roe's aunt helped finance her tertiary education, Tessy received financial aid from her uncle, and Val received assistance from her grandfather and aunts. Another strategy is being self-supporting working students. Mia was a "working student" from when she was 11 years old until she graduated from high school. Teri worked part time to put herself through college as her scholarship was not enough to pay for room and board, Marcie was also "self supporting" in college, and Ta Ta was a working student when she began college. A third strategy is to, "study hard" (as Tessy declares) and apply for available local and national scholarships, which both Tessy and Teri did with success. A fourth strategy is for the family to invest in the secondary or tertiary education of a few children as Delia's, Cher's, Ta Ta's, Dawn's and Val's families did. This is discussed in greater detail in the family-household section below.

Mia's remark about government not providing basic education for poor children reinforces the point that poor children from economically depressed regions and rural areas have an educational disadvantage. She links the lack of a meaningful education that could provide them a better quality of life and an opportunity to find good paying employment to illegal migration of women at various stages of their lives. She feels that illiterate youths are more likely to migrate illegally because the legitimate recruiters are looking for workers who have college degrees or at least high school diplomas. Those with only a few years of elementary education will have better luck getting an overseas job through illegitimate recruiters. The uneducated women who did not initially chose to illegally migrate while young and single may consider illegal migration after their children have grown up to avoid the same fate for their children. An additional point to be made here is that for the functionally illiterate, job choices are limited and the jobs which they do find are generally not well remunerated, so accumulating savings to pay for legal migration costs will be unattainable. Hence illegal migration becomes more attractive than legal migration. This was the case for Mia and Ta Ta, both of whom went overseas illegally.

Of the eight participants who went on to college, four had attended private schools at some time in their school years. Delia attended a private primary school and a public high school, Val attended private schools all the way through from primary to college, Dawn attended private high school and college and Ta Ta attended a private high school but a public college. None of the non-college educated participants had attended private schools. There is a general feeling by the participants that the quality of education differs widely, depending on whether one attends a private or public school. This is evident by participants' comments such as: "I was lucky to go to private school…[my brothers and sisters] only went to public schools" (Ta Ta), "There was no choice. I had to go to a less expensive public school" (Delia), and "I want my kids to get the best education at private schools" (Marcie). The general feeling of the participants is that the more money you are willing and able to spend on education the better quality of education you will receive. This, however, may not necessarily be so, with the University of the Philippines being one example as it is a public university that provides quality tertiary education by subsidising costs, especially to students from low socio-economic backgrounds. Additionally there are some public schools in urban areas that provide better quality of education than some private schools.

Participants like Marcie also believe that the more "prestigious" a tertiary educational institution is the more likely its graduates will get the best jobs. The belief that private educational institutions provide better opportunities for students than public ones resulted in further family hardships which forced parents to make difficult decisions. For example Ta Ta's mother had decided to "invest" only in Ta Ta's private education at the expense of Ta Ta's siblings and Marcie felt migration was her only option to get herself out of the debt she incurred while sending all three of her sons to private schools. Enrolling children in private primary schools is less common than enrolling children in private secondary schools. Only 7 percent of the total number of Filipino children enrolled in primary school (grade 1 to 6) attended private schools (for the years 1990 and 1996), while at the secondary level the percentage was much higher with 36 per cent in 1990 and 29 percent in 1996 (UNESCO, 2000). This may be due to the perception that private schooling for younger children is not as important as privately educating children at the secondary level. Marcie feels that private secondary education is more desirable than primary schooling because it will better prepare her sons for college and will more likely lead them onto a private college education. "First he should go to private high school and then he should go to private college…" Marcie also believes that her son will have a better chance of getting professional employment overseas.

Participants explain that in another way, accessing education by migrating from home to an urban area may instigate the out-of-country migration. For example, Mia who had been living away from home stated that she felt she would not miss her family when she went overseas because she had not been with them for four years anyway. Migration from rural areas to urban areas at some point during their lives to attend tertiary education institutions or for a job was not unusual for all the rural participants. Eight migrated to urban centres for employment. Of the eight who went to an urban centre for employment four went to Manila/NCR. Once having experienced living away from home, even if only a short distance from home, women may gain confidence in their independence and a desire to travel further afield. Morrison (1967) and Land (1969) (cited in Sassen-Koob, 1984) likewise claim that recent migrants have a propensity to move again.

Eight of the participants are from rural areas, where higher education was not locally accessible. Although statistics indicate that the place of origin for the majority of OCWs is from urban areas (Saith, 1997), those that do migrate from rural areas are most likely to be "the cream of the crop" in so far as educational attainment is concerned. Additionally, when the origin of OCWs is examined by gender, a distinct gender difference becomes apparent. That is, more male OCWs migrate overseas from richer more urbanised areas. For example, 30.3 percent of male OCWs come from the NCR region, while only 16.3 percent of female OCWs come from there. Likewise, the number of female OCWs from poorer regions is systematically higher than for males. Saith (1997) concludes that when taking into consideration the fact that male OCWs generally have a higher education-skill profile than female OCWs it is evident that there is a gender polarisation, with women from poorer regions in inferior categories of overseas employment and men from richer regions in superior ones. De Dios (1989, cited in Saith, 1997) explains this by stating that as the demand for female OCWs increased, especially in the domestic worker and entertainer categories, recruiters have had to go further into the hinterland to find new candidates. De Dios' explanation supports Saith's (1997) assertion that there is a distinct gender-region polarisation and specialisation.

### Family-household influences on participants' education

Another theme that all participants referred to which must be addressed is the family-household influence on education which has a great bearing on nearly every aspect of the participants' education – from whether they would receive a grade school or college education to the choices the women made about tertiary education. With the exception of Mia's family, all of the participants' families had a high respect for education and believed that sacrifices had to be made which would allow either all of the children to attend school or at least one child- perhaps the eldest.

A family-household strategy reported by four participants (Ta Ta, Val, Dawn, and Delia) is to pin the family-household's hopes on one educated child, so that by educating him/her the family-household could then expect that child to reciprocate and help pay for his/her younger siblings' education. Family-household may have more capital available to provide for quality primary education for the eldest child, but as younger siblings are born it is necessary for the family-household "to make sacrifices". This could include, as Ta Ta explains, putting the younger children into less expensive public schools or, as in Val's case, keeping them out of school altogether in order to allow the eldest child to continue in a costly private school. Ta Ta provides one such example. As the eldest child she was the only child to be educated at private school. "My brothers and sisters did not go to the same private high school. They are only going to public. I was the only one educated in the private school because I am the oldest." Her mother's hopes of Ta Ta going on to college or getting a job after graduation so that Ta Ta could help her younger siblings were dashed because of Ta Ta's marriage at age 17.

> *My brothers and sisters were all working students even in high school. They lived in another house and worked as house servants there and went to school. You know, I was lucky to be educated in a private school but I am unlucky because I suffered from early marriage.*

Once married there is little or no expectation that she will contribute to her siblings' education as Ta Ta explains: "I did not send money to help my brothers and sisters go to school. Oh no. I have my own kids then so [my brothers and sisters] were all working students."

Val's family-household wanted at least one child to follow in Val's grandfather's footsteps. Two of Val's aunts are teachers and there had not yet been a child of Val's generation to study for the career so as the eldest daughter (but the sixth child) she was told to go to teachers' college. After her graduation Val worked while living at home and helped support some of her siblings' secondary education. When she went overseas she helped support two siblings' tertiary education. She is still single and helps her siblings and widowed mother as much as possible.

Dawn is the eldest in her family and the only one to be given a private high school education.

> *I went to elementary school here in the village – to a public school. I enjoyed high school. I attended a private high school. My aunt raised me [and the next five children born after me]. She was the one who [ensured] I got a good education.*

Upon graduation from college she worked for a year and helped her aunt pay for her five siblings' education fees before she got married.

Delia comes from a family of 13 children. She is the tenth child and the third youngest. Until she was employed and could help her siblings complete their education she was the only one in her family to receive a high school and college education. Although she helped support some of her siblings' education she states, "not all of them finished school". She lives away from her home province with her sister, is still single and still supports her siblings and their families (her parents have since died) when she is working.

Among the participants, it was clear that their choice of career path was significantly influenced by the household elders. Of the eight women who went to college only one of them, Tessy was given the choice of her programme of study. A member of the family-household unit made the decision. Often this decision was made because the family lacked the money, but there were other factors.

The choice of which high school Delia would attend was not hers. Her parents' lack of money limited her options. In the end it was her parents who chose the high school for Delia:

> *Actually, I did not want to study in agricultural school. It is like a public school. My parents could not afford to send me to any other school. It was difficult. I paid 10 pesos per month I think, [not including] our books and other things.*

After high school both she and her parents agreed Delia should get a post-secondary degree. Delia wanted to become a nurse but again, the family finances restricted her plans. Her parents made the choice of which degree she would take: "As soon I finished high school I went to college, Agricultural College - the same school as where I did my high school."

Like Delia, Val was not the one to choose her field of study. Val would have chosen a career in nursing, but "for practical reasons", family reasons, and financial reasons, Val's parents influenced by her grandfather and aunts made the decision for Val to take education:

> *Well my parents chose the course for me to take at college. My parents wanted me to be there. Well, it was what I wanted too, but well no, actually it wasn't. What I really wanted to be was a nurse, but my parents want me to be a teacher because my grandfather has a school. So they want me to be a teacher to substitute for my aunts, like that, but I feel not interested, but I follow them because they are my parents. I cannot say anything because I think their purpose is for my own [sake]. I wanted to be a nurse before but my father said no for financial reasons because the schooling to be a nurse is expensive.*

There was no expectation that the eldest child – the son would become a teacher as he was to have taken over the farm after the father passed away. As the eldest girl her parents felt Val should take education.

For Dawn, it was her aunt (her guardian) who decided what college degree Dawn would study. The cost of the course was the deciding factor: "I did not choose midwifery as my course. It was my auntie [who] chose. The tuition is much cheaper than other courses and my auntie financed all my expenses." But Dawn's dream as a young girl was not to be a midwife. She explains: "As most young girls, I dreamt to be a housewife with sufficient food, not so many luxuries but a simple house."

Bella also studied midwifery for two years at college but it was not her choice. Her family made the decision and because of this Bella did not enjoy the course.

> *That was never my plan before to take midwifery. I wanted to do Engineering, but my father wanted me to take Nursing. My sister forced me to go to Midwifery School. I went because my older sister forced me. I thought, "Well, I will try, but don't force me to go everyday!" But I do not want to go. The first year was very hard. I was very bored with the subjects because that is not my interest. But I had many friends, so I just finished as a compliment to my parents. My parents paid the tuition.*

Teri did not choose to take secretarial. She had other hopes and dreams: "I wanted a good job. I wanted to be a trainer - an athlete, a professional athlete and until now I [have] wanted to take computer [courses]." However, there did not seem to be a future in being a professional athlete – not enough government support and it would be a precarious job for a woman, so she was encouraged by her parents to take secretarial studies.

Roe had desired to be a teacher but because of a lack of money it was not possible for her to attend college. As she and her family wanted her to get tertiary education of some sort it was decided with the support of an aunt she would attend a vocational college. As she noted, "after High School I went to Manila and lived with my auntie, I attended a public vocational school. It was cheap - only 20 pesos. I got a diploma after six months."

This 'choice' set Roe on a different life-course to the one of which she had dreamed. She was disappointed that she could not get a college degree but is thankful she had the chance to get a diploma because it helped her to find a job at a factory sewing shoulder bags.

Tessy, the only college educated participant who went on to graduate school declares that although she never dreamed of going to college, she chose to do the degree that she wanted when given financial assistance through scholarships.

> *I chose to take education at college because I want to teach, to help other people, and because the teacher is a molder of children. What you say to the children is going to have [an impact on them]. What you tell them it is true. The children respect me. But when I was a little girl my dream was not to be a teacher. I didn't dream I could ever go to college because we were poor.*

Mia summarises two of the main points participants raised regarding lack of choice of college education. She explains that parents have traditional ideas about what occupations for which women and men should be trained and educated.

> *There is a belief that engineering is for boys only. It is my personal belief that this is from the feudal system of education we have in the Philippines. In my province all my neighbours say that their sons must take engineering and usually it is the parents who choose what course their children will take.*

She adds that it is also the family-household's income, which will force parents to choose their children's education:

> *Parents also consider the cost of their children's college education because to be a teacher it is only four years of college. To be an engineer it takes five years. Medicine takes more than four years too. It is expensive for parents to keep their children in college for more than four years, so it is cheaper to educate girls if they take teaching or nursing.*

**The benefit/waste of formal education**

When asked if they found any relationship between the content of their formal education and their choice to migrate, only one participant (Dawn as elaborated below) felt there was a direct link. The participants with degrees stated that simply having a degree – any degree was a "ticket to an ODW job" although practical education like sewing, cooking, and childcare (learned in midwifery courses) was useful in their jobs as ODWs. The others stated emphatically that it makes no difference to employers and recruiters whether you are a high school graduate or a degree holder or not.

Regarding their formal schooling the participants said it has been useful, practical, and helpful in their lives. They unanimously declare that there was nothing specific in their formal schooling, which inspired them to travel and work abroad, although Dawn refers to indirect messages she learned from school, which led her to understand that life outside of the Philippines is better (discussed later). Here they describe the most memorable subjects they learned at school:

> Roe: *At school I took home economics. I learned cooking, sewing...*
>
> Tonnette: *I learned dancing, modern and cultural dance at school.*
>
> Val: *The subjects I learned at my school were English, math, science... They were useful. Everything, yes, everything I learned at school was useful.*
>
> Mia: *I took all the subjects: Science, History, English... It was all useful to me.*
>
> Bella: *At school I learned the spiritual values which are very important as well as the academic subjects. I took all the subjects at school. In fourth year we still had to learn Spanish but I [have since] forgot[ten] it. I also learned English. I did not enjoy*

> *Spanish but I enjoyed English. In Social Studies and Geography we learned about other countries.*
>
> Delia: *The course was four years, but I finished in three and a half years, because I took summer classes. I took three specialisations. We should take one specialisation but I took three. Yeah, but it is extra money for each specialisation -for the projects... like in cooking, foods and then I went to clothing and then I went to handicrafts.*
>
> Ta Ta: *I went to a public school elementary school and a private high school. I took Science, Tagalog, literature, the other subjects. I got a little bit of learning about other countries.*
>
> Teri: *It was a big school. I joined athletics. I went all the way to the national athletic track and field competitions. I did everything in track and field. I was very good and wanted to become a professional trainer.*
>
> Dawn: *My education was practical. I learned geography, especially about the USA, Europe and Asia. We never touched the Middle East.*

Dawn adds that from learning about these other countries she learned that "the economic conditions are better [in USA] than in Asia", which made her "dream about going to the USA." In an indirect way Dawn received the message that to migrate is to succeed.

According to the participants who were high school graduates, basic education is sufficient for getting a job overseas. Cher concedes that the knowledge she obtained from the high school subjects has been helpful and useful, but she is certain being a high school graduate makes no difference in getting a job overseas: "Recruiters and employers do not care whether you are a graduate [from high school] or not. It is no problem if you are not a graduate, but speaking English helps."

Tonnette also believes a basic education will be sufficient for getting a job overseas and adds that knowing the official language of the host country is an asset. "Even if you have elementary education - no problem, you can still be a domestic worker overseas. But it helps to speak Arabic [if you are going to an Arabic country]. I learned Arabic on the job."

Ta Ta similarly makes the point that being able to pick up the language of the country in which you are working is an advantage:

> *I speak English, Tagalog, Ilango, and Visayan, and I can speak the dialect of many other Filipinos. I am a flexible woman in attitude. I can listen and learn. This is my advantage! When I meet other women I can soon pick up what they are saying. Even when I returned [from overseas] my friends say that I sound different because I picked up the accents from the other speakers. But I only learned a little Arabic. I do not like this language. Well, I can speak a little,* Shway, shway [Arabic word meaning little], *but it is like a tongue twister to me.*

Asked if education helps one to find a job Mia answered: "Education does not matter that much. Before it did not matter to find a job here or overseas or anywhere, but now you should be a high school graduate." She adds it is the person's personality and willpower, which will get you what you want in life. Bella agrees with Mia that it is one's personality that will help him/her find an ODW job and will help in coping with the job. Bella claims a "strong fighting spirit" as well as "bravery", and the willingness to "take as a challenge – if others can, why can't I?" She adds, "Nobody cares about your education. Education does not matter for ODWs in Hong Kong. Even if you are a doctor, or a nurse, or a midwife it doesn't matter." Ta Ta also supports the importance of a person's characteristics: "Even though I have not finished my college [degree] I can manage. I am out-going and friendly to anyone, I can talk to any one. That is why I love to talk to foreigners to improve my diction." She also mentions a desire to learn more and experience other countries. Other participants mentioned strengths of personality that were even more important than education (although it is possible this strength could have come from being educated). For example, Marcie speaks of self- confidence. Tessy refers to "a fighting spirit", being confident, "smart", and experienced. Val also uses the term, "fighting spirit". Roe talks of a desire to be challenged.

For the college graduates a college degree with practical skills can be useful but most agreed that what degree they had does not really impact on their job prospects as an ODW. For example, Delia took agriculture at college, a programme which included courses in cooking, sewing and handicrafts. She states that overall her degree has helped especially in getting a job overseas, although she admits as far as getting a job as an ODW, any degree would have been fine. "I cannot do anything with these skills now [like using them for a small business] because of a lack of finance. Only I use the cooking skills. My college education made it easier for me in getting my job in Kuwait but they [recruiters and employers] did not care about what kind of college degree I had."

Val believes that her teaching degree helped her get a job overseas, especially because one of her duties as domestic helper/nanny was to be an English tutor for the employers' children.

Dawn believes that her degree in midwifery was very helpful in securing an overseas job and enabled her to do her job as nanny much better than someone without her training. She says of her degree: "It really helped me a lot. I got no hard times in caring for the kids, especially the new born ones."

Bella similarly states: "My degree helped because as a midwife I know more about taking care of babies and toddlers and old people." Bella also feels that the courses she took toward her B.Sc. were helpful because she was required to teach English to the children she cared for in Hong Kong:

> *[My employer] told to her husband I can speak English well. So then they want me to use English with the children. They know I speak good English, even they do not speak English. Their five year old wants to talk to me in English. The children ask for my help with English lessons.*

Teri believes her education helped in finding a job. She states: "My education helped me to get my [ODW] jobs because employers want educated [ODWs]. At school I studied agriculture, separate subjects, and practical education like cooking and sewing. Some of these skills I can apply in my life now."

Roe, who has a certificate from a vocational institution states that her public high school education, especially the practical skills has been helpful in her ODW job. In her words, she enjoyed school. "In high school I took Home Economics. I learned cooking, sewing… and the main subjects. I still use these home economic skills and used them when I was in Hong Kong [as an ODW]."

Two participants however agreed that when one is ready to start college, one should consider a degree that is useful for getting work overseas. For example, Delia explains that her plan was to get a specific degree for the express purpose of using that education in an overseas job. She clarifies: "I wanted to take Commerce or Nursing at college so I could go abroad as a banker or a nurse. Ah! My dream! I always tell my friends and family I want to go abroad but I did not expect to go to work in a house." Although Delia could not do the degree she wanted she was able to "make the best of" her degree in agricultural college and go abroad as an ODW. She feels that although she didn't get the degree she wanted nor the overseas job she had hoped for, she still got to go overseas. In this way her degree partially helped her get what she wanted: "Before my ambition was to work abroad in a bank or a hospital, but then reality comes... but I did go overseas."

Marcie provides another example. She feels that her sacrifices in providing her eldest son an education at a reputable college would be paid off if he gets a job overseas as an engineer. She would also like to see her daughter go overseas to work as a professional. She states:

> *I would want my son to go overseas to work as an engineer. My daughter I don't want her to go as a domestic worker, but as a professional yes okay. My daughter is very independent. She gets was she wants. She is very brave and has a strong personality so she could work overseas successfully, but I don't want her to work as a domestic worker. I want her to go to college to take something professional then if she wants she can go to work abroad.*

**Analysis**

As mentioned in chapter 4, the importance of maintaining good interpersonal relationships with kin through reciprocal obligations and privileges is a value Filipinos learn early in life. This value is highly influential when it comes to education. Parents do what they can to provide education for their children and children are expected to oblige their parents by studying hard (Bulatao, 1970; Medina, 1991; Ventura, 1991, cited in Miralao, 1996). Also elder siblings are expected to assist with their younger siblings' education, while in return the younger siblings are expected to show deference to their elder siblings for this favour (Miralao, 1996). These expectations have resulted in the family-household's sacrifices to educate the eldest child (as was the case for Ta Ta and Dawn), the eldest daughter (as was the case for Val), or the child who seems most likely to do well in school (as was the case for Delia), who in turn help support their siblings. This appears to have been an effective strategy for their families with the exception of Ta Ta's because she got married after high school graduation and as Tacoli (1996: 22) reminds us "marriage marks a considerable decrease in children's obligations to their parental household, as their new family becomes their priority." Partly due to her sense of obligation to her parental household, Dawn put off her marriage for one year after graduating from college in order to help finance her siblings' education with her wages from her first job.

Val's family-household choice about the eldest children's education was largely based on reasons of gender. The family-household wanted someone in the family to become a teacher (to follow in the footsteps of the aunts) and it seemed most befitting to the adult family-household members that a girl should take up this occupation. Additionally, it had been decided early on that the eldest boy would take over the family farm, which he did when the father passed away. Fegan (1982) makes an interesting claim which supports Val's family-household decision making outcomes. Fegan asserts that although the Spanish inheritance practices were instituted in the Philippines they were eventually reversed and primogeniture was gradually reintroduced but with some modification for family-households which have small land holdings. The present practice is to bequeath land to sons while daughters are provided higher education. Alcantara (1996) maintains that this practice partially explains why there are more highly educated women than men in the Philippines.

The authority value along with their parents' sense of *pananagutan* (responsibility) and their family-households' limited resources all resulted in the women's lack of choice about their career path. The women often had one career in mind but due to either a lack of money for tuition fees, or parental/family-household members' "encouragement"/ insistence the participants followed the career goals someone else set for them. The apparent acceptance of this gentle coercion without argument by participants Delia, Val, Dawn, Marcie, Roe and Bella (although Bella had a lengthy discussion with her sister and father about their decision in which she expressed her disagreement) reflects the authority pattern they had learned growing up. Moreover, Miralao (1997: 209) reminds us that "Filipinos generally abide with prevailing familial expectations and related cultural traditions which serve as their guidepost for living." Their lack of choice of career affected at least one of the women's attitude toward her studies. To express her resistance to her elder sister's and father's career choice for her Bella showed her disinterest by deliberately not working on her assignments to her full potential. In contrast Tessy, the one participant who was able to take the degree that she wanted, expressed great enjoyment and satisfaction in her studies, "My studies were very interesting. I enjoyed all the courses very much. I was excited about [becoming] a teacher."

Not having the opportunity to make their own informed career decision by taking into consideration their values, interests, personality and skills also affected the women's sense of job satisfaction. For example Delia was not interested in agricultural studies. Her first job after college was as a forest ranger – a field related to her degree but she found the work conditions too difficult and unsuitable for her personality and interest so she quit and has never since tried to find a job in that field. Val never aspired to be a teacher and although it was a health problem that required her to quit her job as a teacher she preferred the job as a manager in a private business. She then deliberately searched for jobs that were unrelated to her college training, although she admits she enjoyed tutoring English to her charges in her ODW job. Bella did not enjoy her first job as a midwife in a hospital, although she came to enjoy midwifery after she began working for an NGO. With no specific aptitude and lacking appropriate personal characteristics for a particular profession the women often did their jobs without enthusiasm or as much care and creativity as they could have. To Bella (in her first job), Delia, Val, Dawn, and Teri their jobs were "just jobs". They expressed no enjoyment or satisfaction with their jobs, with the exception of Bella who came to enjoy her second job as midwife. These women were on the look out for other job opportunities. Additionally, those who were dissatisfied only with the salary of their professional jobs (Bella and Tessy) were also looking out for other jobs which would provide a better salary than what they earned or could earn in their current employment. To all of these women ODW jobs seemed the answer.

The degrees the college educated participants obtained are education (Tessy and Val), midwifery (Dawn and Bella), secretarial (Teri and Marcie) and agriculture (Delia). All of these degrees, with the exception of agriculture have a majority of women students – female enrolment is as high as 80 percent. Due to sexist tradition women are often channelled into certain (acceptable feminine) professions even after a hundred years of liberal ideology toward schooling for girls and women. Since the early 1900s the University of the Philippines began admitting women to courses such as dentistry, law, liberal arts, medicine, nursing, and pharmacy (Camagay, 1995). Women have not been limited by the course offerings available to them rather they are limited by the stereotyping which streamed them into "feminine" courses such as nursing (health sciences), education, and home economics while men were streamed into such courses as engineering, business and law (Medel-Anonuevo, 1992; David, 1996). David (1996) notes that despite the predominance of women in the educational workforce, more men occupy key positions as decision-makers and leaders in the educational system.

With parents (or elder siblings) choosing their children's education or students making their own choices to study stereotypically gendered courses, there is a growing surplus pool of unemployed women educated in nursing, midwifery and teaching (and a surplus of male engineers, lawyers, and businesspeople). These unemployed and underemployed women and men often turn to migration for employment and as a better paying alternative (NCRFW, 1995).

It is not the homeless and unemployed who seek work abroad but those who are already slightly advantaged in the economy (Ventura, 1992, cited in Miralo, 1996) and advantaged educationally. The level of education attained by the participants reflects the educational profile of ODWs reported in numerous studies (cf. Rodriguez, 1996; Brigham, 1995; Heyzer *et al*, 1992; Pertierra, 1992; Osteria, 1994; Stalker, 1994). The studies indicate that the majority of ODWs are above average with respect to their education and skills and in their fluency in English compared with the rest of the Philippine population. This is typical of emigrants in general. Women more so than men, are generally well-educated professionals (Brigham, 1995; Osteria, 1994; Stalker, 1994; Cawagas, 1992; Arcinas et al, 1986), particularly teachers and nurses - the lowest paid professional occupations in the Philippines (Cahill, 1990). This is reinforced by the fact that many countries insist on a high level of education as selection criteria for immigrants (even though, ironically once the emigrant is in the host country their education and skills are not recognised).

Saith (1997) asserts that the vast pool of qualified, aspiring but frustrated section of the population emigrating/desiring to emigrate bears testimony to the failure of the economy but the success of the education system. College educated people account for thirty percent of the unemployed population in the Philippines (Orbeta and Sanchez, 1995 cited in Saith, 1997).

Val explains that since, "migrants must have a degree and more women ... have degrees then more women will migrate". Val's assertion that there are more women with undergraduate degrees than men is supported by statistics from the University of the Philippines which indicate that females constitute 63.8 percent of the undergraduate student population and 62.8 percent of the graduate student population (David, 1996). Furthermore, UNESCO (2000) reports that the national gross enrolment ratio in tertiary education (e.g. total enrolment in tertiary education expressed as a percentage of the population in the five year age group following on from secondary school leaving age) was 32.7 percent for women while for men it was 25.2 percent in 1996. In fact of the 49 Asian countries listed in UNESCO World Education Report only 10 (including the Philippines) had more women than men studying at the tertiary level[2]. Yet while there are more and more women obtaining college degrees there is not a corresponding number of jobs opening up. The result is a highly educated pool of unemployed women. As there are more skilled and trained workers than job openings, employers often hire the applicant with the highest credentials, even if the job is for a semi-skilled or possibly an unskilled position. With the increased demand for higher education the result is credential inflation. Girls from poorer families, who are unable to afford tertiary education are, in effect, prevented from obtaining scarce skilled jobs, and even the semi-skilled jobs.

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[2] The other countries are Armenia, Bahrain, Cyprus, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Qatar, and the UAE (UNESCO, 2000).

Father Prigol (of Scalabrini Center for People on the Move [SCPM] and Episcopal Commission for the Pastoral Care of Migrant and Itinerant People [ECMI]) underscores this problem: "Even the domestic workers are highly educated. The Philippines education system has done well to educate Filipinos but the brain drain is the result of better salary and working conditions abroad" (personal interview, January 12, 1998).

RoseB Guzman of IBON also highlights the wage differential and reminds us of the complex ways migrant workers are exploited in the Philippines and abroad:

> Many teachers go overseas to work as nannies. They are underpaid here. They work from eight a.m. to five p.m. and are paid only 4000 pesos a month. Nurses are also underpaid. They migrate to the USA often to work as nurses if possible. Migration follows the global demand and the differences in wage rates, which are created by the transnational corporations. The Filipino [migrant] worker is exploited twice. First by the Philippines – fees they have to pay to the POEA and OWWA and secondly by the pay they receive in the host country [which is] lower than the pay others in the host country receive (personal interview, January 16, 1998).

The college educated participants felt that although working as a domestic worker overseas did not require the education and training they had acquired they did not consider their high school (and college) education a waste only in that it provided a "ticket/ a piece of paper" which could get them their ODW job. As well, the participants felt that their education provided them with more than technical knowledge for a specific vocation. It provided them with confidence, pride, interests and hobbies, and "basic useful knowledge" such as computation and language arts skills. The "practical skills" learned in home economics and midwifery courses such as cooking, baby/childcare, and sewing were useful to their ODW jobs. Val felt that her understanding of pedagogy learned in education courses proved helpful to her ODW jobs where she was required to teach English. But for college educated women the ODW job results in their deskilling. Deskilling is "the systematic process of removing the mastery of a skill or trade from a person" (PWC, 1999: 20). PWC (1999) claim that millions of highly educated Filipino OCWs are suffering from a "forced removal or imposed loss of skills" (p. 20) as they work as ODWs, seafarers, factory workers, janitors, entertainers and in other low paying jobs. Furthermore, as we shall see in chapter 7, upon returning to the Philippines, returning ODWs are again unlikely to find work locally commensurate with their level of education.

Although most of the participants felt there was not any direct link between their formal education and their desire to go abroad, the "hidden curriculum" influenced at least Dawn's perception of migration. Hidden curriculum is "a set of values, attitudes, or principles that is implicitly conveyed to pupils by teachers" (Abercrombie, *et al*, 1988: 112, 113).

Dawn explains that she got the message that "to migrate is to succeed" from her teacher who was impressed by richer countries, particularly the United States. Also, learning about how much stronger the other economies are compared to the Philippines kindled her dream of one day going to a land of "milk and honey". She states: "[When I was younger] I dreamed about going to the USA. We learned at school the economic conditions are better there than in Asia." This notion that the good life is more accessible outside of the Philippines is a concern that RoseB Guzman of IBON expresses in this comment:

> Education promotes a mentality that what is outside the Philippines is better than what is inside the Philippines. For example, the DECS did a study where they asked grade six students to answer the question: Where would you like to travel to? Five out of six place names [to chose from] were in the Philippines. One was outside the Philippines - a foreign country. 95 percent children chose the foreign country. 50 percent said they did this because they did not know where the places that were in the Philippines were, and the other 50 percent said they just wanted to leave the country (Personal interview January 16, 1998).

Father Paulo Prigol of ECMI and Scalabrini Migration Centre also claims that children at school are receiving the message that *to migrate is to succeed*, which is transmitted through the "hidden curriculum" of teachers and others who have a "colonial mentality". He explains:

> There is an underground mentality of migration. If you want to be successful, you migrate and bring back big boxes, the *pasalubong* [gifts brought by a returning traveller], which indicate your success. The bigger the boxes the better. It is like there is a minimum of eight big boxes for each returning Filipino! You must have

> seen in the airport these big boxes? Only in the Philippines will you see this. To go abroad is to be successful…. Even in schools, there is a colonial mentality, which as you know the Philippines was a colony of the Japanese, the Spanish and the Americans, but don't say a word against the Americans! Even though this country was colonised by the Americans, [Filipinos] love everything American…. There are many teachers who have migrated and are planning to migrate. Students know that – they see that. They'd like to [migrate] too (Personal interview, January 22, 1998).

Marcie and Delia explain that at the time of applying for college it is best to consider the usefulness of a degree for overseas employment. When Marcie enrolled her son in a private college she had in her mind that he would work overseas as an engineer after graduating. She also hopes that if her daughter decides to go overseas she will first get a degree so that she can work at a professional job. While still in high school Delia was planning to take a degree which would get her a job as a professional abroad (but this did not happen due to a lack of finances). Guzman of IBON asserts that educational institutions often cater to people who have expectations to migrate abroad even before entering college (like Marcie's children and Delia). Guzman states that the programmes that colleges offer are often in response to the needs of foreign countries not to meet the needs of the Philippines.

> Waves of migration have reflected the type of college education that was in vogue at that time. For example in the 1980s hotel and restaurant management was the course to take since it was demanded by the Japanese owned hotels throughout Asia. It was a four year course. In the 1990's it was physical therapy – a new five year course (Personal interview January 16, 1998).

Her sentiments are echoed by Ellen Sana of Kakammpi, who states:

> The education system of the Philippines is geared toward exporting skills. If you look at how values are formed in schools and evaluate textbooks there is no encouragement for national incentives. DECS [Department of Education, Culture and Sports] promotes the kinds of courses, like nursing and medical technicians, that are for export.

It has been asserted by some (cf. Constantino, 1978; Young, 1982) that the Philippines' formal education system has supported out-migration by generating unrealistic expectations and desires concerning the definition of a desirable life style. The education system, they argue, either ignores or devalues aspects of local life in favour of external, usually Western, especially the North American products, lifestyles, attitudes and beliefs. In his study of the content of local curricula, Young (1982) shows how Ilocano students cultivate a preference for life outside their communities, by imagining a life of plenty in other countries and perceiving their local communities as the vestige of what is backward and undesirable. Related to this is what Pertierra (1992, p. 9) calls the "unconscious conspiracy" established between that which is taught in schools and the returning migrants who often down-play their trials and tribulations overseas and exaggerate their successes. The result is often the romanticisation of out-migration.

When linked with migration, the formal education system has not only no long-term positive effect on the local communities but a dysfunctional effect. According to Pertierra (1992), the formal education system encourages people to seek solutions to the country's problems outside of the Philippines, rather than exploring changes inside local or national societies. Sharma (1987) adds that as it provides a reserve army of labour, the reproduction of class relations is ensured, with the dominant members benefiting most.

### Strategies for change in the formal curriculum as suggested by NGO leaders.

As migration has become a common part of everyday life for many Filipinos, it makes sense to have it formally included in the formal school curriculum. None of the participants had had any encounter with a formal discussion on migration in any of their school subjects but recently the government has come up with a programme designed to educate students about migration. Prigol (of ECMI) however, feels this programme is not presenting a very balanced view of migration. He explains:

> The Philippines government launched a module on migration, a subject, which should be part of school education but migration is not a compulsory subject. [The module] is sponsored by the POEA, DFA and DECS jointly. Scalabrinians were consulted by DECS, but we feel that this programme actually promotes migration rather than educates about migration. We are glad the government is stepping in to address migration as there is an urgent need, but government does not know how to train teachers. The DECS has no know-how about training teachers, so the module is not that successful (Personal interview, January 22, 1998).

None of the participants mentioned whether their children had taken this module perhaps because it is not offered in every school.

To counter the pro-migration messages students receive in schools, Fr. Prigol's organisation (ECMI) has introduced a school programme that informs children about the migration phenomenon and teaches the realities of migration. He describes the programme as follows:

> My belief is that we should start right now with the older students in high school and college because that is where the immediate concern is. We (ECMI) have a programme called "Pastoral and Social Care of Migrants and their Families" in line with the mandate of the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines (CBCP) and the Second Plenary Council of the Philippines (PCPII). The aim is to produce specific material on the area of migration with a pastoral approach (Personal interview, January 22, 1998).

Elaborating on the programme content, Fr. Prigol noted that:

> The seminar is part of social science, but migration is not a compulsory subject. We won't touch elementary schools with this idea. We just want to give information to elementary schools.
>
> We offer seminars to fourth year high school students and college students. We stress the Filipino values, pains and gains, and the affects of migration. For us it is difficult to identify the gains. We believe you have the right to migrate, but in the Philippines you are forced to migrate... the Church condemns this kind of migration. But we say, "it is up to you" and if you go, go legally, if you want to go illegally, we say don't go, we don't recommend it and before going you should know all you need to know.
>
> Our seminars now are between two and three hours, with a minimum of 49 and a maximum so far of 1000 students. We have dialogue and a video, which they do not like because it shows the human side, and too many pains. The Filipino culture has many weaknesses but they don't want to hear this. They know the weaknesses, but they don't want you to tell them. We talk about the economy, politics, the election and the religion... We warn them that in some countries there are no Churches, maybe only temples, keep in mind people behave differently, you have to expect differences...
>
> We have competitions, and I like to teach everything in triads, in a triangle, where we explore three things: values, pains, gains or father, mother, children.
>
> We critique the government. We ask what is the duty of the DFA, POEA, and OWWA? The video is in these parts: Introduction, the Americas, the Middle East, Europe, Asia, and the Church. It was produced in 1994 so the information is out of date already. We mention the immigration process as well. We define the difference between migration, emigration and immigration (Personal interview, January 22, 1998).

Father Prigol states that because he is with a religious organisation it makes it easier for his organisation to get a foot in the door of schools where another NGO would not. "The doors are always open because we are from the Church and because [school administrators recognise] there is a need to address migration in schools." He points out the barriers to the success his NGO faces with respect to the programme:

> We have a problem of language. We cannot teach in three languages and there are so many dialects in the Philippines. What we need to do is train teachers and pass it on to other teachers and they can do the translation or do it in their own language.
>
> We don't feel we are very successful with these seminars because we can't reach out to large numbers. We have three teams, one in Visayas, one in Mindanao and one here [in Manila]. We have given 80 seminars. I myself have done 58 (Personal interview, January 22, 1998).

He feels with more technology and peoplepower more can be done to get the message out about migration.

> We want to buy a laptop computer with an overhead projector attached, and we want to train teachers so they can do the seminars. DECS approved and agreed with this. Then with Teacher Training Seminars (TTS) we can get two teachers to do training and with high tech material we can reach 40 to 50,000, maybe in one year the trainers can reach millions of Filipinos. There are 18 million in the Philippines now who are potential migrants. We have to start with first grade... We do not have the money yet, but I want to use Power Point with movement and images. You know the Filipinos, they want a break every five minutes, it does not make sense to me but we need to do what they want what they like... The high tech system will phase out the video we use because facts quickly become old (Personal interview, January 22, 1998).

Despite Father Prigol's optimism for the school program, Ruby Beltran Director of the NGO Sentro ng Manggagawawang Pilipina is critical and points out the weaknesses:

> The ECMI series for children is a one shot deal. [To be effective] it has to be community based and it has to be embedded in the culture. In schools the topic of migration has to be handled well, it can't be treated as a separate topic or it may spur interest to migrate. It has to include the topic of human rights and career decision making. (Personal interview, January 26, 1998)

An NGO in Hong Kong proposes "field trips" of high school students to the places of work of Filipino workers, especially ODWs so that they can see for themselves how life is for the migrant worker.

MIGRANTÉ is another NGO, which is educating the general public about migration through informal educational activities. Imelda Laguidam, the Chairperson elaborates:

> MIGRANTE has seventeen member organisations around the world... The goals of this NGO Alliance is to raise consciousness of the public through outdoor rallies, forums, videos and speeches.
>
> We need to organise, raise awareness and empower people. Our goal is not to discourage people from going overseas, but to understand problems in order to provide weapons for fighting for improved change. Migration should be an option, not a forced thing due to unemployment, or sub-contracting of labour by companies. We want to educate about what is going on, the reasons for going overseas, the root causes of migration. Some of our goals have been to help people set up other groups. We must fight policies that affect ODWs negatively and improve the working conditions of ODWs (Personal Interview, January 12, 1998).

Guzman, at IBON supports the notion that informative people can make change. She states that the slogan for IBON during the popular struggle to help the Aquino government was "People power needs informative people". Even after "the Aquino government declared war on the people [by] liberalising imports and NGOs were co-opted" IBON's role was and still is to get information out to the masses. Although IBON is not specifically a migration-focused NGO it does provide materials for NGOs, which do have a migration focus.

> We gave consultation material to MIGRANTE although we had no time for a seminar. We let people take our information and reproduce it in a manner, which is more accessible to those they want to reach because we do not have the time to do this ourselves. We reach the general public through our research and publications and seminars.
>
> We have popular education programme and a media programme to reach the mainstream and grassroots organisations, and teachers' partnerships to reach formal schools. We also are working on a radio programme, a package to sell to any radio station.
>
> We provide facts and figures and analysis but the people do not want the analysis. They say just give us the facts, we will do the analysis! Every issue of our publication should be provided with an alternative... (Personal interview, January 16, 1998).

Congressman Romeo Candazo, who is Chair of the sub-committee of Filipino OCWs, House of Representatives stresses the serious problems in the pre-departure stage which he describes and for which he offers possible solutions:

> First, the PDOS is not very effective. They paint a very bright picture of the host country. [And] the young Filipinos are attracted, they are lured by the promises of illegal recruiters. They see exceptional cases of returning workers who can build new houses, they see some success stories but they don't see the negative side.
>
> Second, I would consider another pre-departure problem is the illegal recruitment. The POEA and OWWA can not put an effective check on contract substitution. The

> workers here for example who depart for Saudi, before leaving, they sign a contract stipulating say $500 [monthly salary] but once they arrive to Saudi they change it to $250. That's illegal no? In Saudi that's not illegal but here that's considered illegal. How do you check that? The workers can pursue a case here with the labour relations but that takes 4 or 5 years. And by that time the recruitment agency is already insolvent.
>
> One solution is to impose higher law or stricter sanctions or penalties on illegal recruitment or maybe educate the people about illegal recruitment. I would even suggest that we place in our school curriculum a subject on overseas employment including illegal recruitment. There is nothing in place at the moment. Not yet. The media can help by disseminating information on illegal recruitment. You know we have seven million Filipinos abroad, effectively we have one out of 10 Filipinos abroad. That's a big number. According to a survey every household has at least a relative abroad who is an Overseas worker. So I think there [has to be] extraordinary measures put in place like putting this illegal recruitment and overseas employment as a subject in the school curriculum and in the media and as part of the orientation in churches. That's the only solution. It has to start with grade one, especially in the provinces.

### Informal education

Although the participants did not feel that their formal education had much direct bearing on their decision to migrate, they cite examples of how informally they were introduced to the notion of going overseas.

Ta Ta states that it was nothing to do with what she learned in school that made her interested in going overseas. She explains how informal education through pen-pals she was inspired to travel: "I had a lot of pen-friends…the number one reason why I want to have foreign pen-friends is so I can learn about other countries, other cultures." This informal learning has given Ta Ta a "sense of adventure" and a desire "to travel. I really want to go abroad to other places, just to see the situation." She adds that she has recently been corresponding with men from Canada, one of whom she has hopes of marrying.

Val has also been corresponding with pen-friends all over the world, which has contributed to her knowledge of life in other countries. "I like to know how foreigners live." In addition to learning about life outside of the Philippines she hopes to meet a pen-pal whom she will marry. She concedes that pen-pals "in a little way" increased her desire to migrate.

For Dawn, her observation of American tourists reinforced what she learned at school about the USA – that it is a rich country: "When any foreigner from the USA came to visit our village, we would see they always looked so rich, very proud and dressed with jewellery, earrings and nice clothes."

In the communities of many of the participants migration was a common occurrence. The "grapevine" or "word of mouth" of family members, friends and neighbours was the most common form of informally learning about other countries as places to work as an ODWs. This was the main influence in Delia's, Val's, Tessy's, Cher's, Bella's, Ta Ta's and Roe's decision to go abroad. For example, Delia states: There is a friend of mine who asked me if I wanted to stay – to work in Kuwait. I say, 'OK, I will try it'. So I went to an agency…" Val explains: "Before I left Mindanao a friend encouraged me to go abroad." Tessy states, "I have lots of friends and also cousins who are domestic workers in Singapore. I heard what it is like there and that you can make money there." Cher's father-in-law is abroad in Malaysia – the country where she went to work. With him there, "I learned a little about what is Malaysia". She adds, "I have self-interest to know more about it". Bella has a sister-in-law working in Hong Kong who told her about working as an ODW and helped her find a "direct-hire" employer. Ta Ta declares, "I learned about working in Hong Kong as a domestic helper only because of what my friend said. She told me in Hong Kong you are only a domestic helper but they are paying you very high." Roe learned about working overseas from a friend: "My friend suggested to me about working overseas as a domestic helper in Singapore." She also heard about being an ODW in Hong Kong from another friend: "I had a friend who said the Hong Kong employers pay high salaries."

Another informal way of learning about migration is through recruiters, previously unknown to the participants, who went to some of the participants' homes to spread the word. For example, Dawn explains that "An old lady came to my house from an agency to recruit me."

Both Ta Ta and Mia were recruited to work abroad illegally by traffickers, who were so called "friends of friends". Mia was initially recruited by the owner of the boarding house where she lived and worked as a domestic helper. Once she began dancing lessons to prepare to be an entertainer – a legitimate legal job she was immediately noticed by the choreographer's friend: "The choreographer's friend recruited me to work in Singapore as a domestic helper. So I decided not to go to Japan as an entertainer."

Ta Ta elucidates that she was recruited to go to work in Hong Kong in 1986 as an ODW "Through a friend. Not knowing their intention was not good. They only wanted to make money out of me."

In 1990 she agreed to another offer from "a friend of a friend". She explains:

> *I got this job through a friend. Again another friend. It is not a recruitment agency. It is just like a mini, a something like... well, they are from Manila and they have friends and the friends will say, "Oh there is a hiring there [somewhere overseas]." They were a Filipino trafficker and a Pakistani also, but a Filipino doing this monkey business there! They sell their countrymen to get money. That happened to me also in Hong Kong.*

Her next recruitment in 1991 came from: "Another friend [who] asked me if I want to go to Malaysia. A different friend. Every time a different friend. He is a friend of my sister's."

Even if the participant had not directly heard through informal kinship and community networks or from a recruiter about working overseas, they have observed the accumulation of material wealth by migrant workers. For example, Mia felt that as there were so many migrant workers in her area who had gone abroad to work as ODWs whose families appeared well off, she had been considering since she was a little girl that migrating would be desirable for her whole family.

> *In my community, in my province so many women went overseas to work as domestic helpers... I see that many entertainers have jeeps or tricycles and houses and I want to buy those things for my mother.*

Cher also commented on the number of ODWs in her neighbourhood: "Lots of people from here are working as domestic helpers abroad."

Other participants give accounts, which reinforce the notion that the general perception in Philippine society of ODWs is that they are wealthy. Bella states: "People are expecting us [returning ODWs] to have a lot of money. They think we do not need to work because we have enough money." Delia similarly proclaims: "When people know I have worked overseas for almost 10 years they say, 'Wow!' … They think I am rich." Ironically one participant, Val, who went abroad to make money to help her family states that most migrants go overseas mainly because they desire more than they actually require. She declares: "Filipinos just want so much money, that is why they go overseas. The number one reason is to acquire luxury items."

Additionally, all of the participants are aware of the internationally newsworthy stories of ODWs Sarah Balabagan, Flor Contemplacion, and other high profile cases through the media – television, radio, and newspapers. One participant has a few newspaper clippings of these cases saved "with my papers" "because it is interesting to know about [these cases]".

It was interesting to see how Sarah Balabagan and Russel Contemplacion, the daughter of Flor Contemplacion have been adopted as national symbols and how their fame was used in the election campaign during my stay in the Philippines. For example, in the Philippine Daily Inquirer the headline read, "Is Sarah a candidate?" Sarah appears with Senator Roy Señeres who was the former Philippine Ambassador of UAE in his campaign posters and her name is mentioned after his whenever he is introduced to crowds. The paper reports,

> 18 year old housemaid who gained world wide sympathy after being jailed and later released in the UAE after killing her employer is now in the thick of election campaign. …Crowds mob her to get a closer look at her and shake her hand…. Señeres said Balabagan has been a boost to his campaign. (Philippine Daily Inquirer March 2, 1998, p. 2).

Likewise, the same paper reports that "Russel Contemplacion, the daughter of Flor Contemplacion who was executed in Singapore in March 1995, made a pitch for the candidacy Speaker Jose de Venecia during a Lakas rally here [San Pablo City] Saturday night". The paper reports Contemplacion as saying, "I am not an actress nor a singer, but I am standing before you to campaign for Speaker De Venecia… It was Speaker De Venecia who helped piece back the broken dreams of my mother". It goes on to report, "Upon learning that she was Flor's daughter, the audience broke into applause and cheers." (Philippine Daily Inquirer March 8, 1998, p. 4).

In addition to the news there have been other exposures in the popular media. For example, Marcie and Mia recall watching TV talk shows which have on several occasions featured ODWs and/or their families describing their experiences or making appeals for justice (example of Mrs. Lumbay Cabitigting who appealed to government officials to get her husband's body back after he was beheaded in the Middle East (cited in Panganiban *et al*, 1994). Mia herself appeared on "Channel 7" and "ABS-CBN" after returning to the Philippines telling her story. One interviewee said she had read a book about ODWs' and their families' experiences called *Mga Hibla ng Pangarap* (1994) published by Kanlungan Centre Foundations, but only after returning from overseas. Interestingly, these media stories did not dissuade the participants from migrating. Rather they raised the ODWs' awareness of the possibilities of working overseas, the potential for "excitement" (Ta Ta) working as an ODW, and stirred their desire to help these ODWs in some way (Bella, Ta Ta).

Informal education was also the main way for participants to learn valuable information about the countries for which they were bound. Although this knowledge was limited in its depth and scope it was often more useful than the official PDOS information which is discussed in detail below. Participants explain that their pre-departure information was gleaned informally from friends or family members who had been abroad or through self-study by looking in atlases or in whatever books were available to them.

> Bella: *[My sister-in-law] told me working is very hard in Hong Kong but life here in the Philippines is very hard [too].*
>
> Dawn: *I looked on a map to see where is Brunei. I could have been better prepared to go overseas to Brunei through the help of training and through more self-interested study. It was really me who located where on this world is Brunei. I also researched on their beliefs and their customs.*
>
> Delia: *My friend told me a little, not too much about [Kuwait]. ...[In fact] my friend never went to Kuwait but her friend told her about the situation. I hear people say in the Middle East it is too hot, but I did not really know what is the meaning of "too hot".*

## Analysis

The labour migration of Filipinos has been changing the Philippine landscape for decades but particularly since the 1980s. As Philippine labour migration becomes "normalised within the culture of daily life in many historically, culturally and socially distinct localities which make up Philippine society" (Barber, 1997: 41) few Filipinos are left unexposed to the notion of migration. The signs of increasing labour migration are popping up everywhere with the proliferation of advertisements for products, services, and overseas employment for migrants; the increasing number of recruitment agencies, courier companies and other shipping and receiving businesses, currency exchanges, overseas banking transaction services, books on the subject, travel agencies, airline ticket offices, and migrant NGOs. Additionally, I have made several personal observations, which I believe indicate that migration has begun transforming local culture in Philippine communities. One example is when I went looking for an anniversary card at the "National Bookstore" for my husband. As I was going to be away on our first year wedding anniversary, I thought I might find a card that said, "To my husband across the miles on our anniversary" or something to that effect, although I was doubtful. What a surprise when I saw a double length of shelving with at least six full length rows of shelves containing cards for loved ones living/working overseas/abroad/across the miles/with distance between us, and the like for every single occasion. Cards for migrant mothers, sisters, daughters, granddaughters, nieces, fiancées – with sentiments such as, "Mother, even though you are working so far away on this special day, we want to say, we are so thankful for the sacrifices you are making for us. You are always close in our hearts…" Another highly visible example is the numerous jeepneys sporting Canadian, American and other countries' nationalistic paraphernalia like flags, banners, pins, buttons, and windshield and bumper stickers that read, "Supported by Canadian dollars" or "With love from the USA!", or "*Katas ng Saudi*" [juice of Saudi].

The visible alterations and additions (e.g. new buildings) to certain villages and towns, which have been erected by ODWs' remittances is yet again another obvious example. When I was taking a long bus journey passing through towns and villages, passengers on the bus noticing the concrete two story homes, playground equipment, and paved roads remarked, "There are a lot of domestic workers from here!" The influx of home appliances and hi-tech entertainment equipment brought as *pasalubong* [gifts] by the *balikbayan* [returning migrant] are also evidence of changes taking place within the home. While I was interviewing an ODW in a Hong Kong shelter for domestic helpers, she showed me a photo of her children dressed in fancy party clothes standing in the living room of her house in the Philippines in front of new furniture, a large screen television, a stereo, and karaoke machine. She explained that these new acquisitions which her husband purchased on credit as soon as she left for Hong Kong have put them in debt and for this reason she can not yet go back home.

For many Filipinos international labour migration has become the typical means to self and cultural realisation (Barber, 1997) – a journey of achievement, "a secular pilgrimage in a quest for economic bounty and life experience" (Aguilar, 1996: 114), a way to "earn the mark of learned men [sic]" (Asis, 1995). It is a rite of passage with the migrant's sense of being is suspended until the status of a successful returned ODW is attained (Turner, 1967). For participants such as Mia, signs of migration were everywhere and she believed it was only a matter of time before she went through this "rite of passage".

For the participants, informal education as described above is the most effective means of getting the word out about female labour migration compared to other forms of education and for some it was one of the most useful ways of obtaining pre-departure information.

### Non-formal education

One form of non-formal education, which nearly all of the participants experienced before going overseas, was the pre-departure orientation seminar (PDOS) or basic pre-departure training and information seminar.

The POEA provides "an outreach education programme to enable potential OFWs to make informed decisions". This has taken the form of a compulsory pre-departure orientation seminar for workers[3]. As general public awareness and concern for the well-being of migrant workers increased as well as the complaints from migrant workers about the crooked practices of recruitment agencies and abuses, the PDOS is seen as one important method of ensuring that potential migrants are prepared for life abroad.

Mrs. Susan Cabreroz, second director of POEA, describes what the POEA offers at the pre-departure stage:

> At the pre-departure stage we give comprehensive education especially for the women migration sector. We offer the balance sheet – successful and non-successful stories, happy and sad stories, and the risks and the rewards. The POEA disseminates information and does advocacy for [ODWs]. We are campaigning for consciousness of the realities of working abroad (Personal interview, February 27, 1998).

The participants who had received the POEA's PDOS reflect on their experiences, highlighting the negative aspects:

> Cher: *[The PDOS] was only three hours. They taught us how to use the gas range and the vacuum and they gave us the address of the Philippine Embassy [in Malaysia]. I did not learn anything about Malaysia.*

> Bella: *I had a PDOS in Manila by the POEA. I paid for this. 5000 pesos. They did not teach us so much. The PDOS only taught us about riding the aeroplane! And the do's and don'ts of carrying luggage. They told us a bit about the Chinese people, but not so. They just concentrated on riding the plane. They talked about banks, that there are so many in Hong Kong where we can deposit our money. They gave us a Metro Bankcard and we had to pay 10 pesos for deposit*[4].

> Dawn: *The agency offered a PDOS. It taught me about the daily chores. How to use the floor polisher and the vacuum. They told me there would be no pork and that the*

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[3] This responsibility was entrusted to the POEA in 1983 under its pre-departure orientation division. Before the establishment of the POEA in the 1970s the OEDB had offered a form of PDOS although it was not compulsory. At the same time various NGOs were providing their own form of PDOS at the request of the workers and their families. The most notable of these NGOs was the Centre for Overseas Workers (COW). COW workers were called upon to assist in the PDOS (SMC, 1992).

[4] Banks are invited to make presentations at PDOS – in fact while guest speakers are paid by the POEA to speak about certain topics the banks pay substantially to be allowed the opportunity to advertise their services to migrant workers (SMC 1992).

> *country was Muslim. They told us not to wear make-up [because] the women are very jealous but I had no idea of what to expect.*
>
> Delia: *The [recruitment] agency gave me a PDOS, but only about the job – how to do domestic helper work. The POEA only gave me a receipt. The agency worked for POEA, so they processed all the papers. You cannot leave the country by yourself - like a direct hire, you have to go through the POEA.*

Val asserts that the PDOS was useful, especially as she was given one good piece of advice:

> *We had a PDOS at Kaibigan [an NGO]. That is the requirements of POEA. It was very useful because it is like an orientation. When you arrive there [the country of destination], it is useful. I did not take a bible on the advice of the PDOS. They advise you not to take one.*

Despite her praise for the PDOS she admits that she did not have sufficient information for living in Saudi Arabia or Taiwan.

> *I did not know about Saudi. [When in Saudi] I cannot understand [the language]. I watched TV there but I did not understand so the kids tell me. ... I did not know about Taiwan either. I was just thinking that when I am there I would adjust. Learning is by process, so that is in my mind, so I will adapt to the culture in Taiwan. I did not think I needed to worry as [long] as I did my job and my responsibilities. I felt the same way before I went to Saudi.*

Teri asserts that the POEA provided PDOS and training, and her contract was on the "up and up", but she maintains that none of what she learned in PDOS helped her to deal with the employers' violations, abuse and exploitation she encountered when she began working in Singapore.

> *I got the job through an agency of POEA. I paid 250 Singapore dollars. That is 5000 pesos for processing and 5000 pesos for training and medical. 10,000 in total. We had training from POEA. Everything is legal. I attended the seminars, the training... everything. So we are surprised by [the crooked things] that happened.*

Roe talked positively of the PDOS particularly as she received information specifically about Singapore – which included negative stereotypical information about the "Chinese" Singaporeans which unfortunately was what Roe experienced, yet like Teri the PDOS did not help her to deal with the problems she faced with her employers.

> *Yes, I had a PDOS. The agency gave it. They told about Singapore. I learned that the Chinese people are difficult to work for. They are too proud and they are cruel.*

> *It is difficult to get close to them. I was afraid of them before I went there and when I worked there they treated me like a dog.*

Marcie felt the PDOS provided useful information. She volunteered what was discussed at the PDOS: "I had a PDOS. They told me everything: How you deal with people, what are your responsibilities and what the employers' responsibilities are to you… the do's and don'ts of the country."

Mia explains that when she was preparing to go to Japan as an entertainer she received little useful information:

> *[When getting ready to go to Japan] the promotions agency gave us a telephone number to call if we have problems [when we are in] Japan. They taught us only cultural dancing and singing, nothing else. They said if there is a problem, we should go to the Embassy, but did not give us names of NGOs.*

Although the PDOS is compulsory two participants who got their jobs through an agency not registered with the POEA did not receive a pre-departure orientation seminar (PDOS):

> Tonnette: *Before I went to Kuwait I did not know anything. My Madam taught me how to cook Kuwaiti food with the gas stove. I did not receive a PDOS because it was through an agency [not registered with POEA]. I never went to POEA.*
>
> Tessy: *I did not take a PDOS, I never heard of it. My agency is very fast. I applied for I think only one month and then I went right away. Maybe because when I applied they interviewed me and maybe they see, they know I know everything already, how to work, how to plan, you know? ...They see I have a degree already.*

Delia was the only participant whose hiring agency spoke directly to one of her family members: "They talked only to my sister, because my father was in the province he cannot come here. They explained to my sister about my job and where I am going."

Dawn thinks that government should consider more carefully the idea that PDOS adequately prepares migrant workers for life abroad. She explains:

> *The government should really help those OCWs through giving them proper knowledge of dealing with foreign people. They must have at least knowledge of their beliefs, customs and traditions so that they could adjust themselves.*

All of the participants complain of not receiving any information about the host country's culture – especially the language and the social way of life (as Dawn states "the beliefs, customs and traditions"), climate, history, location in the world, the economy, main industries, etc. Delia and Dawn highlight how their ignorance of rules and the country they were moving to contributed to their pre-departure fears:

> Delia: *Before I went [to Kuwait] I was really scared because I did not know about the people. I did not know about the climate, only about the Islam. I did not know anything about Kuwait....*
>
> Dawn: *I was nervous because I had no idea about Brunei.*

**Illegal recruitment**

Although Mia (for her job in Singapore) and Ta Ta (for jobs in Hong Kong, Kuwait and Malaysia) were recruited by illegal recruiters and therefore obviously did not receive a PDOS, their pre-departure experiences offer another important perspective that should be added to the discussion of pre-departure information and how private and government recruitment agencies/individuals affect the lives of ODWs. While participants above complain of being inadequately prepared through the PDOS programmes, trafficked women like Mia and Ta Ta are even more unprepared. They were not given any information about the receiving country, the date of departure, how they would be travelling (i.e. by boat or plane), or about the true nature of their overseas employment.

While Mia was preparing to go to Japan as an entertainer she was noticed by the choreographer's friend, who Mia speculates often attended the dance lessons to look for women such as her. She relates her experience:

> *I said I did not have any money to pay for the expenses so I did not have to pay for anything. [The recruiter] provided all my expenses, my dresses and air ticket. After two weeks [of being recruited] we left to go to Singapore. I left with five other girls. They were 15 and 16 years old and I was 17. I was the oldest in the group. We thought we were going to be domestic workers. I knew nothing about Singapore. We received no pre-departure information.*

The recruiter knew Mia and the other young girls had no money and because of this and the fact that the girls were inexperienced and desperate to work abroad he found it easy to convince the young women he was an honest person who was merely being helpful. Mia's passport and travel arrangements were "taken care of" by the recruiter and Mia was deliberately "kept in the dark" about all aspects of her journey, the country to where she was going, and to whom she could turn to if she needed help. When Mia arrived in Singapore she found out she was to work as a prostitute and the expenses she had incurred (for clothes, air travel, etc.) were to be deducted from her earnings.

Ta Ta was recruited three different times by "traffickers" who got her jobs illegally in Hong Kong, Kuwait and Malaysia. She describes her first recruitment:

> *I went there in Hong Kong by someone who sponsored me on a six month working visa but I did not work for the one who sponsored me. Without my knowledge I was sponsored by a someone who wasn't a true sponsor!*

Her ODW experience was very exhausting and she returned to the Philippines after six months. Then an offer came to work illegally in Kuwait in 1990. In more ways than one Ta Ta travelled "blind" – not knowing the details of her travels, where Kuwait is in relation to the Philippines, the language, the culture or climate of Kuwait or even the nature of her job.

> *The mini agency is illegal and actually my passport was not stamped by the POEA. In three days, oh I am in Kuwait! They bypassed everything [all legal requirements]. The [recruiters] promised me I would go as a clerical worker, they knew about my speedy typing, but when I got to Kuwait, Oh! I am a domestic helper! ...I never had any education on the culture or anything. I didn't know where on the globe it is. I didn't know anyone who had been there. My friends told me, "You are being a good gambler because you know nothing about it and you are going there!"*

Only after she was en route did she begin to realise the sneaky strategies of the traffickers, yet when she asked questions of the traffickers she was ignored.

> *I came by Pakistani Air. I don't know why. Maybe because I was illegal we went to Pakistan first and then I noticed my ticket was changed. I asked [the recruiter], "Why Pakistan?" but he did not explain to me that we would stop over in Pakistan, so I learned everything only after I went home. Oh the strategy of those trafficking people. How to earn more money out of their countrymen.*

She returned to the Philippines during the Gulf War and only three months after returning from Kuwait she took an offer to go abroad again. She was nervous but her past travelling experience gave her courage. Once again she was not told of how she would travel, what route they would take, or what her job really would be once she arrived.

> *[The recruiter] said that I have the personality to be a receptionist in a hotel in Malaysia. I knew we were going illegally and I am really worried but I am also too confident, because I had been abroad before. Only one day after I said I would go they came and said to be ready to go tomorrow.... They did not tell us any information or anything about what to expect, nothing, nothing. I knew nothing also about Malaysia. I knew it is an Asian country so I am not worried. I knew that in an area there are all Filipinos who migrated there. Muslim Filipinos. Maybe without my experience I would not be so confident. It is also the birthplace of my father. When we arrived we were told we were prostitutes from Davao!*

**Analysis**

With an increase in the number of Filipinos going overseas as migrant workers in the 1970s the government organised to provide programmes for the workers. With the institutionalisation of the 1974 Philippine Labour Code two boards were established: the Overseas Employment Development Board (OEDB) and the National Seaman Board (NSB). In 1982 through Presidential Decree 797 the Philippines Overseas Employment Administration (POEA) was established to replace the former Bureau of Employment Services, the OEDB, and the NSB with the objective of promoting and developing the overseas employment programme and protecting the rights of workers (UN, 1998). The POEA was reorganised in 1987 to regulate private sector participation in recruitment and overseas placement, maintain registry of skills and secure best terms for Filipino contract workers (POEA website, 2001). In 1995 with the passing of the Republic Act 8042 the POEA was given more specific focus. This includes:

> …tripartism in decision making, full disclosure on the terms of employment, deregulation of regulatory functions, selective deployment to countries where workers' rights are protected, development of systems and information technology for labour market information, one-country-team approach to synergize the services to Filipino overseas, expanded grassroots outreach education programme to enable potential OFWs to make informed decisions and restructuring of systems for disposition of adjudication cases related to overseas employment. (POEA website, 2001:1).

The Second Director of POEA, Susan Cabreroz further elaborates on the POEA's recruitment responsibilities:

> The POEA is responsible for regulating the recruitment of overseas workers through government-to-government hiring. We do not compete with the private sector. We act as a registry of workers and employers. We document workers and assist employers. Domestic Helpers can only be hired through licensed recruitment agencies. Direct hiring is not encouraged. We have a policy not to have direct hiring – this is so we can assist the workers. (Personal interview, February 27, 1998).

The POEA's regulation requires that the general PDOS include this content:

> a) Code of discipline and the obligations of Filipino workers overseas (support for family, payment of taxes, foreign exchange remittances, etc.) – at least one hour discussion.
> b) Terms and conditions of employment (contract) - at least one hour discussion.
> c) The job site or the vessel - at least 30 minute discussion.
> d) The host country (customs, practices, religion, social, economic and political system, labour laws and administration) - at least two hours discussion.
> e) Government services to worker overseas (embassy, consular offices labour attaché services, OWWA, POEA, etc.) - at least 30 minute discussion.
> f) Travel tips – at least one hour discussion. " (SMC 1992: 15).

The PDOS should be a duration of six hours to be used as suggested above. The PDOS is only offered in Manila and workers usually take it three days before departure. The PDOS occurs only with an average of 80 participants in the seminar. Initially PDOS was free but now "charging workers as part of their placement fees has become standard practice" (SMC 1992: 18).

The POEA offers the only PDOS specifically for ODWs and mostly those who are bound for Hong Kong receive it (SMC, 1992; Cabreroz, 1998). Mrs. Cabreroz explains this POEA responsibility:

> There is a special sector for Domestic Helpers [called] the Household Workers Centre …[ODWs] have training on general household management to prepare them and give them skills like babysitting. TESDA developed a training curriculum and now they are looking into [establishing] training centres. They conduct certification to see if [the workers] benefited from the training, then [the workers] go into a pool of workers. The PDOS for Domestic Helpers is centralised with the NGOs. Evaluation of the NGOs' PDOS is lacking so we solicit help from the ILO (Personal interview, February 27, 1998).

In July 1991 due to private recruitment agencies charging excessive fees, the POEA was requested by DOLE to take responsibility for all domestic workers destined for Hong

Kong. The POEA-OWWA Household Workers Placement Unit was created which accredited HK recruitment agencies, conducted worker training[5], processing and deploying as well as welfare programmes. However, by September 1991 the Supreme Court ruled that a restraining order be put on the POEA deployment until the legality of such deployment could be determined. Licensed agencies therefore could resume placement of ODWs, provided that the agencies underwent new accreditation and contracts were authenticated by the Philippine Consulate General (Memorandum Circular No. 46, Series of 1991). These new guidelines were temporarily suspended because there was a backlog of ODWs waiting to be placed.

SMC (1992) in their study of pre-employment and pre-departure services for Filipina migrants report that there are a number of failings with the PDOS. The report states that although PDOS is compulsory many migrant workers do not receive it to the standards of the POEA. Arnel De Guzman, the executive director of Kaibigan, an NGO, which offers PDOS, claims that when deciding on their PDOS content: "We improvise. POEA does not regulate us and we are evaluated by the POEA only once a year" (Personal interview, January 14, 1998). The concern is that with inadequate government monitoring of private recruitment agencies an estimated "90 percent of private recruitment agencies accredited to give PDOS provide substandard or no PDOS at all" (p. 12).

The participants who received a PDOS declare that although learning about operating appliances (such as the gas cooker and vacuum) and about aeroplane travel was useful and helped alleviate some of their fears, more basic facts and information on how to address more serious problems should have been covered. For example, Teri and Tessy claim that learning how to deal with contract violations and abusive employers should be the first thing covered in a PDOS. Not knowing how to operate a vacuum cleaner has far less serious consequences to one's health and life than not knowing how to get help when being starved, overworked and abused. Bella, Teri, Tessy, Marcie and Tonnette maintain that proactive steps must be taken to ensure that these problems are not allowed to occur in the first place but if they do there must be someone who comes to check on the ODW at their place of work (chapter 6 covers this suggestion in more depth). Val and Dawn also stress the need for PDOS to cover such topics as language (at least how to pronounce some of the most important phrases), history, culture, traditions, and "proper knowledge of dealing with foreign people". Marcie adds, "the do's and don'ts, your responsibilities and your employers responsibilities to you" should be included. Roe asserts that the content of her PDOS only exacerbated her fears of what to expect mainly because of the stereotypical images of Chinese Singaporean employers as "cold" and "cruel". Stereotyping and making generalisations about a nation and its people are ways of reducing complex realities to fit into a time slot only a few minutes long but they do not serve the migrant well. Stereotypes only reinforce the one-sided exaggerated and often prejudicial view of groups of people and are resistant to change because they create a sense of social solidarity (Abercombie, 1984). As it turned out, Roe's experiences with Singaporean employers confirmed the stereotypes she learned in her PDOS. However, acting on stereotypes only reduces the possibility of real understanding between people, of seeing the "other" as a human being with similarities to oneself.

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[5] SMC (1992: 22) gives details about a training course for domestic workers and hotel workers destined for the Hong Kong market that National Manpower and Youth Council (NMYC) and two businesses developed in 1991. The content included Housekeeping (20 hours), dining service and guest relations (20 hours), nanny care (8 hours), use of home appliances (8 hours), first aid and medical emergencies (8 hours). It took eight days and totalled 64 hours. It cost 800 pesos (in 1991) and a two and a half hour written and hands on test was given after completion. None of the participants in my study had taken such an extensive training.

The participants raise the concern about the amount of time spent on the important topics in PDOS. Delia, Val, Bella, Cher, Dawn, Tessy, Tonnette and Teri believe that to cover all of the information a longer time period would be required for the PDOS, but they declare it would be time well spent, especially if the PDOS was offered closer to their homes/villages so that they could attend over a period of weeks without having to travel far from home to attend. SMC (1992) likewise make this criticism of the content:

> On the whole respondents from all sectors (government, non-government, private industry) interviewed for this study feel that PDOS content is lacking in important information for migrants and for women in particular; too little information is presented on the culture, language, laws and services of the countries of destination. NGOs see PDOS as being ineffective at developing workers' capability to handle adaptation problems or employer abuse, noting that

> understanding documents and contracts as well as measures for self-protection is particularly important for women in occupations prone for abuse (p. 16).

Since participants in PDOS are not divided by occupation, country of destination, skills specialisation, or gender only general information is provided. Materials distributed to workers are lacking in that there is nothing about legal recourse workers can take if faced with employer offences, nothing on terms of standard employment contract, nothing on protection of workers, nothing on government services (other than OWWA) and country profiles are outdated (SMC 1992). This was my observation as well. Corpin (1992:81) the then administrator of OWWA who praises OWWA for its programmes and services acknowledges that one of the weaknesses and "urgent need[s]" is to focus welfare programmes "on the needs of workers according to their categories and their countries of destination", specifically so that problems can be addressed according to country of destination and by skill/occupation.

Recruitment agencies make a substantial amount of money by charging fees to workers for PDOS programmes and the fee varies [500 pesos is the average fee in 1991 (Asian Migrant Workers Centre, 1991), although my participants state that they paid 5000 pesos]. Because of the profit motive it is not in the POEA's or the recruitment agencies' best interest to deter workers from working overseas, therefore negative aspects of overseas employment are not stressed. Indeed NGOs maintain that PDOS fosters attitudes that will result in "docile uncomplaining employees" (SMC 1992:12) instead of providing knowledge or support for workers' self-protection.

As mentioned above, Ta Ta and Mia who went abroad illegally obviously did not receive any pre-departure training or information (although Mia had had a PDOS in preparation for her legal recruitment for a job Japan, which she did not take). In fact the recruiters denied them the most rudimentary knowledge of all aspects of their travel and life abroad. Mia felt that had she received a PDOS earlier (e.g. as soon as she had made the decision to go abroad) she could have been more aware of the dangers of trafficking. Participants Cher, Bella, Dawn, Tonnette, and Teri all lived at least a day's bus trip away from Manila and therefore could only take the PDOS when they were finalising their departure. SMC (1992) similarly criticises the fact that because PDOS is only offered in Manila many participants from other regions travel to Manila only shortly before departure to complete necessary documents and only then do they take PDOS. A PDOS three days before departure is too late for workers to protect themselves from illegal recruitment. Due to anxiety many workers feel at the time so close to departure concentration is difficult and if doubts arise about the choice of job or country it is too late to change one's mind.

**NGOs and PDOS**

Professor Marla Assis at Scalabrini Migration Centre describes the history of PDOS, which is currently overseen by POEA and the vital role NGOs have played:

> Regarding PDOS, it has to be co-ordinated with POEA, we [NGOs] have to go through them, but we do not receive any money from them. The mandatory PDOS programme started in 1983 and before that NGOs were providing something like a PDOS. Families and OCWs were requesting this information and counselling so in the 1970s NGOs were providing a pre-orientation. Since 1983 it has become institutionalised but PDOS information was pioneered by the NGOs. Values formation was not initially included. The government and the private sector (recruitment agencies) began to offer PDOS, although NGOs reacted to it because these agencies had a different agenda, which was to promote the benefits of migrating. These were there for the profits, not for the welfare of the migrants. Perhaps they even promoted docility not the opposite, to please the employers. So later NGOs became the ones to offer PDOS. But, even now certain NGOs are reluctant to be PDOS providers, as they may appear to be agreeing with the government, but on the other hand you need to provide PDOS information, so there is this tension (Personal interview, January 30, 1998).

Members of MIGRANTE recognise this tension and therefore do not offer PDOS under the POEA because they feel it would be sending the message that they are in partnership and agreement with the government on its migration policies. Imelda Laguidam, Chairperson of MIGRANTE states:

> We do not provide any pre-departure orientation but we would like to have input on the [PDOS] - to add information, up-grade the programme of [PDOS] which would include policies, cultural information, political aspects, practical information... (Personal interview, January 12, 1998).

Two officials (Abbot and Estella) at OWWA explain what they know of the PDOS and the reason why PDOS is often left to the NGOs:

> The first phase of the overseas job - the pre-departure phase, we at OWWA do not deal with. The POEA conducts PDOS with their NGO partners which deals with such things as contracts, employers' conditions... The PDOS is a half day orientation session which gives information about the life in the country of destination, cultural practices, do's and don'ts, and the Embassy's role. This is left to the NGOs because they can better address these things than we [government agencies] can (Personal interview, January 20, 1998).

Ruby Beltran, Director of Sentro ng Manggagawang Pilipina, an NGO for migrant workers is highly critical of the PDOS. She explains:

> PDOS is inadequate. The reasons are there are too many students in the sessions. Having only ten to 15 is not viable. And there is a dislocation of goals and intentions of the PDOS staff who are NGO workers. PDOS fees are a good way to make money for NGOs so their goals are not the same for all NGOs. And also the time and places PDOS is offered are also problems. The initiative for educating about migration must be undertaken within a [broad] framework and it has to be monitored and maintained. Whose doing what? What does the POEA and OWWA and DOLE do for example? OCWs don't know about their services and what is offered. They are not aware of what is available for them. The communities have to be saturated with information. There is no excuse for not knowing the information they should know before departing. OWWA has regional offices. They should be providing information all over the country. They should be providing information about the conditions of the country, the job, the fine points and the danger points of migrating. (Personal interview, January 26, 1998)

I was able to observe a PDOS offered by an NGO, Kaibigan. It was a full day seminar as prescribed by the POEA. The description recorded in my field notes of the observed PDOS reflects some of the concerns of Ms Beltran.

> The room was filled beyond capacity with at least 80 women sitting on plastic chairs and some on wooden benches near the door. It was very hot with two ineffectual fans near the front. The facilitator spoke in English, which some of the women in the room could not understand well. I spoke to some of the women afterwards and learned that they were not fluent in the language. The facilitator was very upbeat and appeared to have done this orientation many times before as she covered the topics briskly and without pause. The women seemed to focus on the facilitator most of the time, although it was obvious by their fanning themselves and shifting in their plastic seats they were as hot and uncomfortable as I was. A video was shown, which was provided by the POEA. The TV was not visible to all of the women in the room (I myself saw a sliver of the screen at an awkward angle) and the audio quality was not very clear. Some time was provided for the participants to ask questions of the facilitator. The questions were often asked in Filipino and answered partly in Filipino and partly in English. Other than the question-answer session (5 minutes) the only other interaction was when the participants were encouraged to

> repeat, "Prepare for the worst and expect the best!" Regarding content, I observed only an hour out of their day workshop. At that time, learning about the aeroplane and airport was the main focus of the presentation. The participants received a book entitled, *Pinoy Overseas Migration Folio* (Vol.2, Number 1. October, 1997), which offers important and useful information that is not offered in the PDOS. This includes a brief background on migration issues – "Globalization and APEC: Its impact on the Philippine economy and the Filipino OCWs", the text of the Republic Act 8042 and a comment about the Act "R.A. 8042 Two Years After". In addition there are country profiles of Hong Kong, Taiwan, Malaysia, Brunei and Saudi Arabia, as well as a mini dictionary of common words and phrases in Chinese and Arabic with English and Filipino translations. In the back there is a GO-NGO Directory which lists Philippine Embassies and Consulates for Abu Dhabi, Brunei, Qatar, Hong Kong, Saudi Arabia, Malaysia, Kuwait, Singapore and Taiwan, and NGOs for Hong Kong, Malaysia, Singapore and Taiwan. The participants also received the *Overseas Filipino Workers Handbook* prepared by the POEA (Personal Fieldnotes, January 14, 1998).

None of the participants had claimed that they had received any literature from their PDOS, although POEA (through the NGOs) provides pamphlets on AIDS, banking (sponsored by Metro bank), and a book called "Overseas Filipino Workers Handbook" (4th edition, 1996). This 178 page soft cover booklet contains pertinent information regarding recruitment for land and sea based workers, sending remittances, bringing goods through customs, obtaining a passport, country profiles a few years outdated (one page each for Brunei, Japan, Singapore, Malaysia, Taiwan, Jordan, Oman, Saudi Arabia, UAE, and Qatar), sample contracts (written in English), a list of embassies and consulates, and a list of accredited medical clinics and hospitals for OFWs in the Philippines. However, the booklet "A Guide for Filipinos Working in [Name of Country]" provided by the POEA sponsored by Metrobank sets out general guidelines for living and working overseas, the emphasis of which illustrate that the major concerns are not with empowering the OCW with information that would help him/her see his/her way out of oppressive conditions. Under don'ts for example, the OCW is told: don't to litter, especially in public places; don't wait until your employer imposes a curfew on you; don't wear tight-fitting jeans or shorts or flimsy blouses; don't gossip; don't envy other Filipinas who enjoy perks such as their own room; don't waste your time and risk your reputation hanging around in disco houses. Under do's the OCW is told: do remit your money through established banks; do pay your taxes on time; do be cheerful; do be thankful and appreciative of your employer's kindness; do show love for your employer's children; do keep yourself busy (A Guide to Filipinos in Hong Kong, 1993). More than half of the pages of the entire booklet is dedicated to a list of Metrobank's addresses in the Philippines and abroad.

Leo Legaspi with MIGRANTE and MWSR claims that the PDOS content must be broadened to include: "a migration orientation on national issues, an understanding of labour export policies of the government linked with the Philippines societal context, freedom and democracy" (Personal interview, January 12, 1998).

Father Prigol of SCPM and ECMI points out the uselessness of the PDOS especially when it is given to people only days before they are to leave.

> The PDOS, they give this when the people's mind is already set to go. They don't care [shrugs shoulders] "I am leaving, that's it! Say what you want. I don't care". They sit there not listening. They are thinking what is the airport like? Is there a toilet on the aeroplane? And they are being told, "Don't spit on the street." But the teachers [of our proposed programme] will help with this... (Personal interview, January 22, 1998).

## Conclusion

Filipino ODWs are generally highly educated with at least a high school education, which is the case for all the participants, half of whom also have post-secondary education. Despite financial difficulties and distance from secondary and tertiary educational institutions all participants completed high school with the help of family-household strategies or in Mia's case through her own strength of will. Four of the participants attended private schools, which required even more sacrifices on the part of the family-households because of the higher school fees that private institutions charge. These participants believe that the private school system offers superior educational and occupational opportunities than the public school system. From my own limited observations of five public schools and five private schools in the Manila and Cebu city areas I can say that all five of the public schools were overcrowded, (in several Elementary classrooms two children shared one chair and in one school at least one class did not have a classroom at all and were instructed in the school courtyard), lacked sufficient number of textbooks and teaching materials, and were not air-conditioned. In the private schools I observed smaller class sizes, better teaching materials and equipment including computer labs and audio-visual equipment, sufficient number of newer textbooks, air-conditioned classrooms, and distinctly different pedagogical styles. Teachers in the private high schools were less likely to adhere to the one method of teaching (which in the public schools was teacher-centred and teacher directed), and more likely to encourage for example, discussions, group work, creative thinking exercises, student debates and individual student presentations. In the private elementary schools the children's learning of different subjects was more integrated and the teaching style was child-centred. The students were encouraged to creatively and artistically express themselves and regularly worked in small groups around learning centres where interacting with their peers was encouraged.

Some of the family-household strategies resulted in a loss of autonomous choice as to the ODWs' tertiary education. This loss of choice indirectly impacted on their decision to migrate, mainly because the women felt dissatisfied with their professional jobs or with their salaries and ODW jobs provide an alternative. Additionally, the commitment to help educate their siblings also impacted on the participants, Val's, Delia's, and Roe's choice to migrate, as they felt that working as an ODW enabled them to "repay" their parents/family-household members by assisting their siblings' education.

Throughout this chapter and chapter 4 the participants have emphasised that formal education is the way to improve their lives and the lives of their families. However, they also assert that higher education does not necessarily result in employment, higher incomes, job security, or job satisfaction.

They feel that formal education (especially post-secondary education but also high school) is as Delia said, a "ticket" out of the Philippines and into the migrant labour force. This is particularly true, as many of the receiving countries require ODWs to have post-secondary education (even though once in the receiving countries the ODWs' degrees are not recognised). In many ways education qualifications are used by receiving societies as a means of "filtering out" migrant workers. Educational qualifications are also used by countries such as Canada, one of the few countries which accepts ODWs as permanent residents (providing they complete their 24 months' service as a live-in caregiver and are successful in their application for permanent resident status) as a way of "filtering out" potential immigrants. Participants moreover pointed out that the disparity between the wages of a person working a professional job in the Philippines and the wages of an ODW is so wide that economically it makes more sense to work as an ODW. Participants such as Tessy expressed their sense of frustration at not finding permanent full-time employment after they and their family-household members had made "sacrifices" to educate them. With a tone of indignant resignation these participants are asking "if the Philippines cannot provide me with a job after all my efforts to become formally educated and skilled then why should I stay?" In fact Marcie is educating her eldest son with the hope that when he graduates he will get a professional job overseas. To her an overseas professional job for her son would be the ultimate return on her "investment".

The notion that college education is primarily a means of becoming a migrant worker is buying into the modernist perspective of education. Formal secondary and post-secondary education provides a certain degree of meritocratic social mobility within the Philippines. But as the economy cannot absorb all those who attain degrees the number of educated unemployed increases and educational attainment becomes a means of discriminating in job selection resulting in more people working in jobs for which they are overqualified and for which their formal education has little relevance. This outcome is the same for those who migrate as ODWs.

While migration has altered the landscape of Philippine society the formal school curriculum is strangely silent on the subject. Informally people throughout the country, even in the most remote hinterland are made aware of migration and the possibilities it represents. Informally the participants have been educated about migration, ODW job opportunities, the working conditions, the receiving countries, and the wealth it can bring to one's family-household. Although this education is lacking vital information, it appears to have filled a void which even the required government instituted PDOS has left. Participants were critical of the information they were/were not provided in the

PDOS. NGO leaders reinforced these criticisms and declared that if it is to be more practical and useful it has to be reformed with more input from NGOs and from ODWs themselves.

# Chapter Six: The ODW phase

## Introduction

This study did not involve the participants directly in the *conscientization* process but as researcher, I saw that my role was to engage in a dialogue with the participants about "their view of the world, manifested variously in their actions, reflected in their situation in the world" (Freire, 1981: 85). Through their conversations I was then able to draw out and synthesise several "generative themes". Freire (1981) and other critical pedagogues and critical feminist pedagogues refer to the importance of critically generative themes as a method for "learners" to come to critically understand their realities. Freire (1981) explains that consistent with the liberating purpose of dialogical education one must engage in an investigation of one's reality – an investigation of one's "thematic universe" or "meaningful thematics". He adds "the object of the investigation is the thought-language with which men [sic] refer to reality, the levels at which they perceive that reality and their view of the world in which their generative themes are found" (p. 86). Therefore, the key generative themes which are discussed in this chapter emerged from the participants' understanding of their lived realities during their ODW experiences. The themes clarify the educational dimension of their experiences. They include economic oppression, racism, gender inequalities, intercultural barriers/interactions and resistance and empowerment.

Critical feminist pedagogues warn that in this thematic investigation process one should be aware of the links between themes, the necessity of posing these themes as problems, and the concern about their historical-cultural context. The data do indicate that the participants are very much aware of the historical-cultural context of their themes as well as the links between themes (particularly in themes of oppression), moreover through problem-posing they have made further links to a key theme of resistance and empowerment. So although as I have stated above the participants are not involved in a direct process of *conscientization,* through the interviews, the participants became involved in an awakening of conscience to the consequences of injustice and to the realisation of the human task of transforming their realities into a more just liberating reality.

## Economic oppression

Most of the participants described their living and working conditions as oppressive and dehumanising. Of the twelve participants, only one expressed satisfaction with her living and work conditions (Delia - in both her jobs). Two others experienced poor living and work conditions in one of their job placements but they each felt satisfied with one other job (Val in her first job and Roe during her second employment).

Although each woman's ODW experiences varied widely, there were similarities in the problems the women experienced, mainly with the workload, the requirement to teach English to the children in their care (in addition to housework), sleeping and eating arrangements, issues to do with freedom, and salary problems. Below the participants describe their workload and duties.

### *Workload/ responsibilities*

Upon her arrival in Singapore Mia was "shocked" by the job she was expected to do and at the job conditions. Mia was led to believe that she was going to work as an ODW. She was recruited by traffickers and was taken into the country under mendacious circumstances. She was given only a two-month visitor visa, which would get her into the country but the traffickers intended for her to work illegally for at least two years. She was taken to Singapore with five other young women aged 15 to 17. Here she describes her first days in Singapore:

> *I didn't know the other [five] girls before we left the Philippines. This was the first time I had met them [when we were flown there together]. They did not speak English or Tagalog. I was the only one who could speak Tagalog so it was difficult to communicate with the other girls. I expected the job I would have there would be domestic work. I arrived in Singapore airport and soon we realised the youngest, the 15 year old was missing. We were taken to the house of our employer, where we were forced to stay. We didn't know what was happening. On the following day, we realised we were taken to Singapore to be prostitutes when the young one was returned to us. She was crying and she said she had been sold for $2000 as a virgin and she [had been] raped. Then we were finally told that we would be prostitutes. Our pimps were a Filipina woman and a man from Singapore. They recruit Filipino girls as prostitutes. We were supposed to make $100 for an overnight ["trick"] with one man. We would get $50 for ourselves and the pimps would get $50. We did not*

> *want to work as prostitutes so they punched and kicked us and we were given no food, only water. We were locked in a room in a condominium that had 95 women living there.*

After three days Mia escaped with the other 5 girls. After escaping she worked at a fruit stand for a little over two months in exchange for room and board. She was caught while on her way to renew her expired visa and was imprisoned to serve a two month sentence but ended up languishing in prison for a year and a half.

Delia worked as an ODW in Kuwait for four years and then in Saudi Arabia for six years. In both of these jobs Delia was not dissatisfied with her workload mainly because she felt it was fair as there were other servants in both the employers' homes who shared the daily tasks. In her first job, which was in Kuwait where she worked between 1986 and 1990, she states, "there were 6 children but I looked after only the two small ones. One was 8 years and the other was 5 months. I cleaned the house but did not cook." In her second job, where she worked from 1991-97 in Saudi Arabia she describes her responsibilities, emphasising again that the household duties were divided between other workers which enabled her to rest in her spare time:

> *In my job in Saudi, there were 5 children. I looked after all of them. They were from eleven years to one year old. I taught English to the older children after school two times a week. Sometimes I cleaned but there was one Sri Lankan woman who cleaned, one other Filipina who was the nanny, and I was the cook and supervisor. I talked to these women. They were my friends. In my spare time I rested in my room.*

It appears that Delia had a wide range of responsibilities to the children as well as to her other jobs considering she was the "cook and supervisor" and there was a full-time nanny employed. She makes no complaint about her requirement to teach English to the school aged children. This additional responsibility to tutor/teach English was mentioned by other participants many of whom regarded the job with disdain because it was an additional job given to the ODW which had not been previously agreed on or written into the contract. It was another expectation that brought no monetary reward and simply extended their working hours. Additionally, not all the ODWs felt they could do this task properly because they had never had teaching experience. For a few participants it was a task they undertook with pride as it was in a sense, a recognition of their education and their English language proficiency. Val provides examples of both of these attitudes.

Val worked in two countries. The first was in Saudi Arabia as an ODW from 1995 to 1997, then in Taiwan for three months at the end of 1997. She recounts the details of her first job, highlighting with pride the fact that her job description included the title of "English tutor":

> *I grabbed the opportunity to go as a domestic helper and English tutor to Saudi Arabia. There were 5 children. I could not understand Arabic so when I watched TV I did not understand so the kids told me. I reviewed English with the eldest daughters who were 17 and 13 every evening. I tutored the other three older children, the 10 year old daughter, the 7 year old son and the 2 and a half year old. I taught them English, spelling and English pronunciation. I finished all my work first. I scheduled my work. I cooked, cleaned, washed. They could all speak English when I finished there.*

Even though she makes it clear that tutoring had to be done after all her other daily duties were finished, basically in her leisure time, and she did not receive any extra payment in exchange for this "service" she felt that by calling herself an "English language tutor" gave her a sense of prestige that the domestic helper title could not because it acknowledged (or at least alluded to) her education/ language knowledge. This tutoring also gave her a sense of satisfaction, pride in her teaching skills as she witnessed the children progress over two years. However, in her second job in Taiwan where she was hired as a building caretaker at a business, she was surprised to find out upon arrival, she was in fact a domestic helper. She elaborates:

> *I found out when I arrived that I had to look after a 10 year old, a 7 year old, and 3 year old, washing, cooking, cleaning, and tutoring English. I started [to teach them] how to stroke English [letters] and pronounce English letters. I must also clean the other house of my employer. That is their house where I stayed. You know what time I woke up? I woke up at 5:00, 5:30 in the morning! I end up finishing at twelve o'clock midnight!*

In this job, Val's responsibilities were too much to fit into a "reasonable" length of day and the tutoring only extended her working hours to 19 hours a day. For these long hours Val was never paid overtime nor on time.

Tonette worked in Kuwait with four different employers. She quit the first job, another she escaped from, in another job she was "let her go" because the employers did not need her anymore and in the last job she did not complete her contract and returned home. She elucidates:

> *The first employer lived in Al Sabah and had 5 children. Their ages were from 10 years down to 8 months. I did all jobs: cooking, cleaning, washing and teaching the kids English but those children were difficult. Not nice to me.*
>
> *The second employer was one old woman. I stayed there three months. I looked after the old woman in the afternoon and did all the cleaning of the house and all around. The employer spoke Arabic and could understand English. I never went out for those three months.*
>
> *The third employer had 4 children. They were from 10 years to 7 months old. It was very difficult. I did cleaning and babysitting.*
>
> *The fourth employer was very nice. They were both dentists and they were young people. They had 2 sons, over one year and the other 4 months old. I stayed 7 months. I did not finish because I was homesick! So I stayed to earn money for the [return air] fare only.*

Cher worked in Malaysia as an ODW from a year in 1996. She explains: "In Kuala Lumpur I looked after 3 children: 3, 8 and 11 years old and I did all the housework" all the while being scrutinised and physically harmed "three times a day" by her female employer.

Dawn worked in Brunei for the same family for five years.

> *My employer [a man] was married three times. I worked with his third wife and family. I had to look after 5 children. They are from pre-school to high school age. I cooked, cleaned, washed, everything for 5 years.*

Bella worked in Hong Kong as an ODW for 2 years, from 1993 to '95.

> *I did the cooking, the washing, cleaning, dishes, laundry, and assisted the children with their schoolwork. There were 2 children. One was 7 and the other was 5 years old. The parents wanted me to use English with the children. They knew I spoke good English even [though] they did not speak so well and the girl sometimes corrected their grammar. Their 5 year old wanted to talk to me in English. The children asked for my help with their English lessons.*

Tessy worked in Singapore for two different employers. She begins by describing her living and working conditions at the first employers' home.

> *I did cooking and cleaning and looked after the two children. They were 11 and 5 years old. I stayed only 3 months then I decided to leave. I had to clean the sister-in-law's house and the mother's house and the employer's house. I was given three*

> *houses to clean! And the sister-in-law had children too! There were twin babies. I was cleaning and looking after the twin babies. It was very hard you know!*

Her duties at the second employer's were much less: "I did the housework and looked after the children. There were 2 children: 2 and 4 years old."

Teri worked in Singapore for two families. In her first job she, like Tessy, was "loaned out" to her employers' relatives.

> *At this [first] employer there was one child, two months old, but I had to stay at the employer's sister's house. This sister had two children, one ten years old and the other eight. And she had another sister who had a baby, so I worked at her house too. So I worked at all of their houses! I did the work of three maids! I surrendered because I had no food and no sleep. After 6 months my real employer observed [that I am not being treated very well]. This is no good for me so I went to live at the true employer's house. Her son was close to me and she wanted me to stay on with her but she did not give me any money. Only on New Year's Eve she gave me some - like a gift. I went to [Singapore to] work, not to play but I was working at everything all the time. Even at night I slept in the same room as the baby. On weekends I stayed with another sister to do her house cleaning. For two whole years I never had a day off. I could not speak with friends or talk on the telephone. [However] I did write letters and my employer would mail them.*

Teri stayed for one year and returned to the Philippines. Then she returned again to Singapore to work through a "direct hire". Unfortunately her second job was not much better than the first. She explains the work and living conditions of this job.

> *There were so many different maids working at the same house. Some Indonesian and some Filipino. But they always came and went. One maid ran away because she was being beaten and had no food. I woke at 6 a.m. and worked until 1 a.m. I was feeding and taking care of the baby, but also cleaned the whole three-story house and washed five cars. We went to Japan one year and Malaysia another time for vacation with the employers. One time the Madam asked me to pack at one o'clock in the morning to go to Australia because she was running away from her husband. We were always packing and leaving to go live in other houses. We were often in the company of men and I am always scared of new faces. But one morning, I asked another maid to run away with me. I know they will [eventually] kill her so I asked her to come to the Philippines Embassy. Another maid had run away before. The madam [female employer] was going to send her back to the agency.*

Roe also worked in Singapore for two different employers. She compares and contrasts the two jobs:

> *I had two employers there [in Singapore]. The first one was very bad - a Chinese family. I stayed there for 2 years. I had to look after 2 houses and I could sleep only from 12:00 midnight to 6 a.m. I sacrificed myself a lot in that job.*

Roe worked in Singapore for five years, from 1992 to 1997.

> *For the second job my employers were German. They were good employers. That was why I stayed so long. He was a principal of a German school and she was a nurse at the university. I had two kids to look after. One was 7 and the other was 9 years old. I taught them a little English and did all the homework with them. I cooked and cleaned.*

Ta Ta reports "surprises" when she arrived at her destination. First she explains what happened when she arrived in Hong Kong in February 1986:

> *I went to Hong Kong. I was sponsored by someone but I did not work for the one who sponsored me. I had to seek work, part-time work once I got there. This was arranged without my knowledge. They [traffickers] promised that when I am there I will make more and more money but I had to feed myself, pay rent for the house... I could not stand it. I wanted to live in with only one employer, but I had to work with three employers and stay at my own place. It was hard because you have one boss in the morning, another boss in the afternoon, another in the evening. I had 3 part-time jobs and physically I couldn't stand it.*

In her part-time jobs Ta Ta was required to do housekeeping duties but not child-minding.

Here she describes her work conditions in her second job, which was in Kuwait.

> *I looked after children - one was 13, one was 10 and the youngest was 7 years old. I taught them English because my employer told me to. Also I cooked, cleaned, and washed the two cars. I was the only maid. I started working at 6:00 a.m. and finished at 8:00 or 9:00 p.m. My employer said I have to rest after 9:00 p.m. I am lucky because other employers have parties until very late and the Filipino maids have to stay there until the party is over. The children they were good - only the oldest is not good. He is a male and you know they are so aggressive.*

In her third job, which was in Malaysia, she was again shocked to find out what her traffickers had planned for her and the other illegally migrating women. She had been told she would be working as a receptionist at a hotel:

> *When we arrived on Malaysian land we had breakfast and then travelled to Korta Kinabali in the centre of Malaysia. We had a little trouble then when we were finally told we were prostitutes from Davao. The men were separated from us to work in a*

> *palm oil factory. Only the women were left and when we heard we are prostitutes we said, "We are not prostitutes! We are receptionist for a hotel!" My friends depended on me so I am the one to say this. I told all the women that it is risky to be a prostitute but if they agreed to do it then they must be careful. They must make a plan. I told them they could be a "second woman" [mistress] for a Chinese married man. That way he will give them help and more money. Only 10 out of the 35 decided to be prostitutes. Some of them married Malaysian men. I know this because their families are here in Davao. Twelve worked as entertainers. The rest of us said we would be domestic helpers. There were 20 of us left. I was the last to be employed. I stayed for 2 months without a job in the house of the agency. After this I was employed [as an ODW] by a family in the place where my father was born.*

Her duties as ODW in Malaysia included housekeeping duties as well as cooking, marketing, and childminding two children. Although the work was very arduous she declares she would have stayed at this job if only the salary was considerably higher.

*Remuneration*

The main complaint all the participants made about their ODW work was the lack of adequate remuneration. Many of the complaints were directed at the employers who often did not pay the salaries on time, had reduced the agreed upon salary through contract substitution or by charging the ODW for breaking things, never paid for overtime work, or did not pay salaries at all. Additionally, the participants also experienced exploitation from their hiring agencies who "double charged", e.g. the employers paid fees to the recruitment agencies but the agencies charged the ODWs with the same fees resulting in monthly deductions from the ODWs' gross earnings for up to three to twelve months. Here is what the participants said about the quantity of their salaries and the employers' ability to pay:

> Roe (in her first job): *...the salary was very low. 260 Singapore dollars which is only 4000 pesos a month.*
>
> Val: *My day off was working overtime but I received no overtime pay! Nothing at all. Per day in Taiwan the salary was 500. I did not finish my contract because the employer was not capable of giving me my salary and it was too difficult to communicate and there were other problems too.*
>
> *Marcie: I received my salary almost on time. It was usually only 3 or 4 days delayed like that but the salary was low considering the work. It was $200 (US) a month at the time with no increases over the 2 years. I had a contract. I signed it in Manila.*

Tessy's main complaint was with the tardiness of her salary:

> *My second employer didn't give the salary on time. Only after I asked for it they gave it. I told them I needed my salary to send home, but they never gave it to me on time. For example at the end of the month they should give me my salary already. But they didn't. I still had to ask. They eventually gave it to me, but my employer still had to talk, talk, talk. You know the Chinese one? And they only spoke a little bit of English.*

Only Bella expresses contentment with her employer's ability to pay her salary on time. "My employer paid me on time every month. I received 3000 Hong Kong dollars each month. I sent 2000 home because I had to pay back a loan."

Tonnette worked for a total of 15 months (at four different jobs) but received a "small salary" for only 10 of those months. She believes this was partly due to her agency's salary reduction scheme but she says she is not certain. She explains that she never knew exactly how much the agency would take each month or for how many months the agency would reduce her salary. She states that in her first job (in Kuwait) where she worked for two months "… for those two months I worked I never received a salary." In her second job (where she stayed three months) she declares: "I received a salary for two months only." In her third job she explains:

> *I received a small salary for one month. I had a contract, which was made between the employer and the agency I think. I don't know but I was paid only a little. The employer paid 350 KD to the agency but did not pay me. After three months I had to leave because the employer said there was no more job for me. They told me to go back to the agency.*

At her final (fourth job) she says: "They only gave me a little salary and some other things too. I stayed 7 months at that job." She declares that after one year she returned with only 6000 pesos [approximately $240 US] yet this money was very helpful in educating her older children.

She expresses some confusion with the agency's charges and it appears the agency took far more from Tonnette's salary than was originally agreed upon.

> *When I went to Kuwait my first three month's salary went to the agency for salary reduction [to pay off the cost of the fees and airline ticket]. But when I got there the employer said, "We already paid the agency for [airline] ticket and fees!" But the agency took my money anyway.*

Delia recounts her experience with her hiring agency:

> *I paid 16,500 pesos in fees in 1986. It was a lot of money! It included the airfare and everything. But when I arrived in Kuwait my employer told me they paid all the expenses for me already. I didn't complain [to the agency]. I just shouldered it. It took a year to pay the agency. I had taken money from my uncle to pay the expenses and my employer said, "We paid already!"*

Teri had a similar story about the agency's double charging as well as the problem of contract substitution:

> Teri (at her first job in Singapore): *I never received my salary. For nine months there was a reduction in my salary [to pay off the agency's fees]. My employer [had already] paid for my air ticket in Singapore. We did not know this [so I agreed to pay it through salary reduction]. After ten months I [finally] received 250 Singapore dollars salary. I had signed a contract for this job in the Philippines before I left but when I got there it was a different one and it said my pay will be less.*

Ta Ta also had difficulty accumulating savings while being obligated to comply with the recruitment agency's salary reduction scheme. In her job in Kuwait she returned with no money after being away four months, partly because of the outbreak of the Gulf War. She explains:

> *One thing good about Kuwait, I should be paid 40 KD a month, [that is about] 3500 pesos and you don't buy any of your personal things because they have to buy it because you don't ever leave the house but I came back with no money at all. Yeah nothing because for two months I had a salary reduction [to pay the recruiters], I never received any salary for two months and I made my third month salary but I never received it because my employer was dilly dallying. He said he would send it but I never received it. The last month salary he could not give to me because all the banks are closed and they also needed money to go to Saudi Arabia. So nothing really. I only got a little and they needed money too because they have three children and they didn't know what to expect in Saudi. When I arrived in the Philippines I was thankful I had 400 pesos in my pocket.*

After her job in Malaysia Ta Ta came back with very little money because of the contract substitution she had to pay the traffickers.

> *I received [the equivalent of] 2500 pesos a month but the agency took 7500 pesos from me so for three months I didn't get any salary. I would have stayed longer but the salary was too low. I left after three months were done because I could earn this salary at home! I had no financial liabilities so I went home.*

Ta Ta adds that when she decided to leave Malaysia her employer gave her some money, which is the only money she returned to the Philippines with after being away for nearly 4 months:

> *My employer wanted me to stay one year but the salary was no good. She said she would give me [the equivalent of] 3000 pesos each month but I had no savings at all... [When I left] she gave me 2500 which is one month's salary!*

Dawn had no complaint about her employers' ability to pay her salary but she states that for one year she did not receive any salary because "I had a salary reduction with the agency to pay for the processing fees, which were 18,000 pesos."

Cher was incarcerated in Malaysia for not having her passport in her possession after she escaped from her employer. She was never paid a salary by her employers. However, her passport was returned to her via the Philippine embassy one month later. She flatly declares, "When I came back I had no money. I had a salary reduction to pay for the processing fees to the agency while I worked there so I didn't get anything."

The practice of agencies taking salary reductions is not uncommon (Heyzer, 1992). Many ODWs agree to the terms before they leave the Philippines because it is the only way many of them could afford to leave. For those that agreed to a salary reduction, like Dawn, it paid off even though it meant that she worked one year without a salary because she stayed for five years. For others who could not complete their contracts, like Cher and Ta Ta, or who had refused to do what was demanded of them, like Mia who was to prostitute herself to pay off the debts to the traffickers, the salary reduction meant that they returned empty handed. The salary reduction also may result in ODWs staying in an unsatisfactory job, such as Ta Ta who declared that she stayed in a job for three months until "I had no more financial liabilities" to the traffickers and before she felt free to return to the Philippines. However, unlike Ta Ta, Tonnette switched jobs whenever it was necessary (either because she was unwilling to continue or the employer laid her off) despite her agency's salary reduction. In many ways Tonnette seemed to be at the mercy of the recruitment agency – as far as her salary was concerned. In her third job, the agency made arrangements directly with the employers and never provided a written contract to Tonnette, leaving her in the dark about how much salary she would be paid each month and in which month she would begin receiving her salary. She states, "I never complained about my agency overcharging me. My friend loaned me some money so I didn't ask for the agency to give me any money back. It wasn't registered with the POEA. It is still operating! It's called AGM." Her reluctance to report the agency's exploitative practices is reiterated by Delia and Teri who also "just shouldered" the overcharging and did not file a complaint. Tonnette went back to her agency three times whilst overseas so her unwillingness to "make waves" is somewhat understandable because she was worried that if she complained they may have refused to help her find new employment and she would be returned to the Philippines. The ODWs' reluctance to report agencies should be addressed in the PDOS. All ODWs who go through PDOS must be made aware of the agencies' role and responsibilities as well as the ODWs' responsibilities to the agency– all of this information must be provided in a written contract that cannot be changed at the whim or fancy of the agency. ODWs need to know the procedures of filing a complaint.

After having worked abroad for two years Teri returned to the Philippines with only one month's salary – the only salary given to her. She explains:

> Teri (at her second job in Singapore)*: I never got paid for three months. The employer never gave the salary, only after three months. There was one maid who never received her salary in two years. The madam [female employer] was always taking away from our salary. She said, 'If you break something you lose your salary.' But even if you did not break anything the salary was still taken away. Whether you break [anything] or not. Even when the children broke something, you [the maids] are responsible. So I didn't get all my salary but what I did [get] [e.g. "New Years' gift money"] I sent home [through a friend- a maid next door].*

When Teri escaped she only had a small amount of money: "When we ran away we took a taxi. We had some money from our New Year's gift." The embassy negotiated with the employer and Teri was given one month's salary and her airfare home. She explains:

> *The Philippines Embassy asked my employer for one month's salary and for my passport. After two weeks the Embassy provided me with my passport. [Maybe] my employer is scared if she doesn't do this because she does not want a record [for maltreating maids] so she provided the passport and one month's salary. I went home with barely no money at all. I returned with one month's salary only after two years working because she never paid me. When we got money it was only "borrowing" money from her. She recorded everything. When I asked her for money*

> *to send to the Philippines, she would say, "No money for you because you break things."*

Mia was also incarcerated (in Singapore for overstaying her visitor visa). When she finally returned home she had no money.

**Spatial deference**

Rollins (1990: 171) writes about a "spatial deference" which she explains is "the unequal rights of the domestic worker and the employer to the space around the other's body and the controlling of the domestic worker's use of house space." This is an attempt of the employers to regulate the spatial movements and whole bodies of ODWs. Participants were very aware of the unequal right to house space mainly related to sleeping and eating arrangements as well as the attempt of employers to regulate their bodies – especially through food intake, but also through restricting basic freedoms (i.e. to pray, cry, communicate with families and friends). Here is what they are saying about provision of food, eating and sleeping arrangements, and freedom.

*Food/eating arrangements*

For some of the women the problems they had with the food in their employers' homes was that it was either inedible (for cultural reasons) or insufficient which resulted in loss of weight and constant feelings of hunger.

> Val: *I was just still adjusting because their food was, ah, it was not good because it was half cooked and we Filipinos do not eat like this. It is just half cooked and there was blood in it and I was afraid! So I was not eating so much. Hmm, I was hungry everyday. Before I was 68 kilos but when I returned I was 57 kilos! [Laughs]. But it was OK because I am always dieting. I cannot control my weight so I am very happy I was 57 [kilos] but now I am becoming fat again.*

For Bella, the lack of food was one of her most serious problems. It was the main reason why she did not renew her contract after it was complete, despite her employer's persuasion:

> *There was not enough food for my daily subsistence. I left Hong Kong because my employer did not eat what Filipinos eat and Filipinos like to eat often. There I only ate bread and rice in the morning and had no* marianda *[snack]. Then only noodles at lunch time and at dinner I ate only a cup of rice. I was so thin when I came back. My employer would count the food, so I had to buy some of my own food. That is why I had to spend a lot of money.*

While Bella had the freedom to go out of the house and was provided a regular salary each month she had the option of buying her own food to make up for the lack but others like Teri and Roe had no such choice. Teri and Roe's lack of sufficient food very much affected their health and ability to work.

> Teri (at second employer's): *All the maids were sick. We were sick because we had no food. The madam said this is only an excuse not to work.*
>
> Roe (at first employer's): *I had not much food and I was hungry so I couldn't work so fast. I lost weight. Before I was 56 kg and after I was 46 kg. I was very thin.*

Teri's female employer withheld food as a way of punishing her employees. According to Teri, the female employer said, "You make me angry, no food for you." She gives an example of a time when the employer thought one of the maids had stolen a piece of jewellery but had no proof.

> *On the third day that I was there the employer misplaced her diamond ring so she took us all three maids who were accused of stealing the ring to the police station. After all day the police said there was no evidence against us and we were told to go back. She was still so angry. I could not understand her attitude. We had no food for the whole day. She didn't care we [had not eaten]. When we got back the sir [male employer] cooked food for us.*

Teri believed the employer withheld both food and salaries as a way of saying, "You are not worth anything" and "I can do what I want [to you]".

Unlike Teri and Roe, Ta Ta and Marcie felt they were "very lucky" to have as much food as they wanted. Marcie states: "Compared to other domestic helpers I was very lucky because I had a lot of food. I really gained weight. …" In fact Marcie, who was "in control of the kitchen" adds,

> *Some Filipinas are given very little food but I was lucky I could eat anything. When a Filipina domestic helper came with her Madam to our house I would always give her food because she was so hungry. I would put bread and things in her pocket to take home. I managed the kitchen so I could do that.*

Ta Ta also considered herself "very lucky" with her diet because her employer (in Malaysia) took into consideration Ta Ta's food preferences and ensured that she received the healthy foods she liked. She also gave Ta Ta advice on maintaining a balanced diet.

> *Abroad apples were cheap. I ate a lot of apples and drank a lot of milk everyday. My employers were always very compassionate to me. They asked, "Oh, [Ta Ta], what would you like to drink in the morning?" I said, "Milk." [She would say] "OK, I will buy for you." I drank gallons of milk! My female employer in Malaysia she is a strong woman really. I experience with her a healthy diet. She would tell me, "[Ta Ta], don't eat like this, like that, don't eat this one or that one...and do not give to my children this." She told me how to train the children to eat [healthily]. She is not giving junk food to the children. Just small pieces. Even if they ask me "Auntie, give me more," I would not give them more. "I am sorry! It is not good for you to eat too much of this." Her husband ate a lot of eggs and meat, and she said, "See, [Ta Ta]. See your Sir? He is eating too much cholesterol. He will die." Her husband would say, "Honey! I am eating!" "He will die easily. If you follow me, [Ta Ta] you will live longer!" She is Chinese Fukyan like me.*

The complaints some participants had about food related issues were with the segregated eating arrangements:

> Marcie: *I could eat my meals but only after they had finished their food and I ate it in the kitchen. I ate with the family only sometimes.*
>
> Delia: *I didn't eat with them. I ate in a separate room.*
>
> Val (in Kuwait): *I ate meals but not really with them because they ate first and I ate second.*
>
> Teri (in her first job): *We didn't have time [to eat] but if we ate we ate in the kitchen standing.*
>
> Teri (in her second job): *When I [was permitted to] eat I could eat only after they [employers] finished their food.*

When I met Teri I noticed how very thin both she and her young son were. The state of poverty that she is living in presently even after her "sacrifices" abroad, which included constant hunger grieves me as her constant hunger is still something with which she has to cope along with her child. Although I felt so much anger toward her husband who had used all their savings and left her and his son without any financial support even though he is employed abroad Teri did not express anger only her sense of determination to survive.

Unlike the others Ta Ta was permitted to eat with the family at the dining room table but she points out her responsibilities before and after the meals:

> Ta Ta (in job in Kuwait): *What they ate I could eat also. I ate with them at the same table, but first I cooked it, put it on the table and then sat down with them and after cleaned up and washed the dishes.*

Most of the participants speak of 'eating segregation' as normal, certainly not unusual. Parreñas (2001) points out that this is probably due to the ODWs' "consciousness of their lesser status in race and class hierarchies" (p. 166). She adds that ODWs who choose to eat separately (when given the option) from their employers may also be "reclaiming their own space, away from that of the employer where their identity is that of a perpetual domestic worker" – "a creative act of retreat…from their role as worker" (p. 166) and also because they would be uncomfortable eating with their employers. None of the participants who were "permitted" to eat with the employers chose to eat separately, but all participants felt that either the eating and sleeping arrangements or both were what (Parreñas, 2001) calls, "markers of dehumanization and servitude" (p. 167) that told them that "the employer didn't care about me" (Teri). For Teri, Roe and Val their employers gave the message that being permitted to eat at all was like a favour the employer had done for them. Their time spent eating was only borrowed time, perceived as wasted unproductive time by employers– likewise with their time spent sleeping. The practice of having the ODWs eat after their employers had finished eating was in Roe's words, "[like being treated] like a dog picking over the scraps the humans didn't want… like a dog!"

Ta Ta, Bella, and Val would agree with Parreñas' (2001) point about a level of discomfort while sharing eating space with the employers. Their discomfort was exacerbated by language problems and other cultural misunderstandings or disagreements (e.g. on what constitutes a meal at certain times of day and how meat is cooked). Ta Ta underscores the fact that simply by eating at the same table with one's employers is not necessarily levelling the hierarchical differences especially if throughout the meal the ODW is replenishing empty bowls from the kitchen, fetching, passing, and serving food dishes as well as doing the preparation before the meal and the cleaning up after the meal.

### *Sleeping arrangements*

Of the twelve participants all but one (Delia) had to make do with sharing a child's room or sleeping in the laundry room, living room or a room that was considered open to employers and all family members, although three eventually (when they switched jobs) had a bedroom to themselves.

> Teri: *I slept with the baby and I got no sleep. Every night I got only three hours [of sleep].*
>
> Val: *I shared a room with the youngest.*
>
> Marcie: *I didn't have my own bedroom. I slept in the laundry room. I had nothing. No bed or dresser. I slept on the floor. I had a mattress and a comforter and a pillow. I made the pillows. I made all the pillows in the house. I kept my clothes in a bag and in a box. I did not get much sleep. I could not sleep especially during [the holy month of]* Ramadan. *The kids would be noisy and jumping on me. Other times I got two hours of sleep a night but that was no problem because I ate a lot.*
>
> Bella: *I didn't have my own room, I slept in a cabinet with only enough room for me. It was like a TV cabinet that can close. It was like this [indicates the size with arms out, hands bent inward at wrist]. I had a small bed in there and I could not turn. From corner to corner there is only enough room for my head to my feet [with knees bent].*
>
> Dawn: *I didn't have my own room, only I slept with the babies.*
>
> Tessy: *I had no bedroom, no bed - only a [piece of] foam to sleep on.*
>
> Ta Ta (in her second job): *I had my own bedroom, with nothing in it, no TV, no furniture only a bed.*
>
> Roe (in her first job): *I had my own room but no privacy because the employer is always coming in and out. That is the difficult thing about working overseas is you have no privacy.*

In her second job Roe describes her room with great pleasure in her voice.

> *I had my own room, my own TV... I even had my own telephone in my bedroom so I talked to my friends!*

Delia also enjoyed her own private space in both her jobs as she simply states: "I had my own room and bathroom."

In many ways I am amazed at how creatively inconsiderate some employers can be in demonstrating a lack of concern about their employees' sleeping arrangements. To suggest that an adult woman sleep in a TV cabinet (Bella), on a shelf (Anderson, 2000:91), or on a stove top (SENTRO, 1998) is as Teri declares to assert their control over the ODW even when they are sleeping.

Parreñas' (2001) claim that ODWs are retreating from their role as a worker by eating separately from their employers can be extended to include any time that they can be away from the constant gaze of their employers. When talking about their sleeping arrangements many participants expressed their dissatisfaction with the lack of privacy so that even during the night their ODW identity was constantly imposed on them and they could never be completely relaxed. Bella, Dawn, Marcie, Teri, and Val complained of having to always be alert even in their sleep in case the children needed them or in case an adult employer came into the area where they were sleeping. Their night-clothes had to be presentable, hair not too mussed and body position "respectable" (Marcie) even in their sleep!

### *Freedom*

Many of the participants stated that the lack of freedom was the most difficult restriction to cope with. To the participants a lack of freedom included being confined to the house, forbidden communication with their families in the Philippines or with others outside of the employers' home, and having their choices of private activities (such as praying) on their own time restricted. Interestingly, Marcie and Dawn felt that the employers were right to restrict theirs and other ODWs' freedom to leave the house because they believed the receiving societies were too dangerous for women and more especially for Filipino women to walk around in on their own.

> Marcie: *Jeddah is a nice place but all ODWs cannot go out. Only as a nurse you have freedom but the domestic helper is the safest job because women are safer in the house. Men, they [*pauses*] always sexually approach you so you must wear the hibiya if you go outside. I was allowed to go out if they wanted me to buy something but all the men are looking at you so I didn't go out on my own. I wore a hibiya but they all can see you are a Filipina.*
>
> Dawn: *For the first two years I did not get one day off but I did not complain because my employer explained to me that it was for my own safety. They were afraid something wrong might happen to me! I never went outside except with the employers. I could never use the telephone. Only through secret calls I talked with my family.*

As a newcomer to different countries including Kuwait, I understand the intimidation one may feel when going outside on one's own for the first time, the fear of getting lost while using public transportation, the worry of making a *faux pas* or committing a serious cultural blunder that could land you in prison, and the concern that one would not find an English speaker who could help. By playing up on these fears in ODWs who are already socially isolated and inexperienced with the new culture employers may convince ODWs who are already generally reluctant to go outside on their own to stay indoors and like Marcie and Dawn may even show appreciation for having their freedom restricted.

Other losses of freedoms included restricted activities, such as letter writing, church going, and time off.

> Roe (in her first job in Singapore): *I stayed [at this job] two years and I was not allowed to watch TV or use the telephone. I bought a phone card. I called my auntie and left messages when I went outside for errands. I wrote letters every week. Sometimes my employer would hide the letters my parents sent but I would find them much later. I could not read the bible because they said I must turn off the light because electricity is expensive.*

At her second job she exclaims:

> *I had ... my freedom. I had Sunday off and I went to church and I had holidays too! I had lots of Filipino friends.*
>
> Delia: *My employers were OK to me. I had no problem with them. ...Sometimes I watched TV with them. I didn't go out by myself. I wasn't even allowed to go to church. I went to the cinema with the family, to the drive-in and to the* jamiah *[grocery store]. On weekends we went to the* Faylikiah. *I was homesick especially when I did not receive any letters from home. Usually I got a letter every two weeks.*
>
> Val: *And you know when I was there in Taiwan I could not go out. I did not have a day off. I did not have one day off!*
>
> Bella: *I could not use the telephone. My employer was very strict. I wrote letters and every Sunday I bought stamps from a Filipina and then dropped [posted] the letters myself at the [post] boxes. I had one day off a week on Sundays and some holidays too. I went to the church on Sunday. I met some Filipinos there at church and after[wards] we would eat in the park together.*
>
> Tessy: *I could not use the telephone. I only wrote letters to my family. My friend, a Filipino maid mailed them for me and sometimes my employer would send them for*

> *me....in my contract they told me I had one day off a week but they did not follow that one. They did not give me one day off a week. They do not let me go out. At the second employer's I did not have a day off [either].*
>
> Teri (in her first job): *For the first three months I had no day off. Then on the fourth month I was given 4 or 5 hours off only one day a week.*
>
> Teri: (in her second job). *[The employer] wouldn't allow me to write letters. She said she did not care about my family. Anything she does not want I could not do it. I only wrote some letters [in secret] and took them out with the garbage. I gave them to a maid, another Filipina, a friend, outside when we are emptying the garbage. She mailed them for me. She had freedom.*
>
> Tonnette (in her second job). *I worked there three months and I never went out for those three months.*
>
> Tonnette (in her third job): *I never went out and never had a day off. I could not talk on the telephone or write letters. They were very strict. However, my friend would mail my letters for me. When I went out to the garbage I saw my friend. I spoke only one minute, said "Hello" and threw the letter to her. It was a secret. I could not complain to the agency because they were no help to you and only cared about taking money.*
>
> Tonnette (in her fourth job): *I could go outside and I had freedom. I could go to church and I had many Filipino friends...*
>
> Ta Ta (in her second job): *I never had a day off. Never! So they are the ones to buy you everything, cosmetics, even sanitary napkins, because they never let you out of the house.*
>
> Ta Ta (in her third job): *When I cried my employer would say, "[Ta Ta] stop crying. It is not good for women to cry. Don't do this in my house. It's not good"*
>
> Marcie: *My employer said I am crazy because she saw me praying. She was so mad. She said praying like that [demonstrates hands together with linked fingers, legs crossed] was not right. I could never let her see me do like that again.*

The participants' accounts of their ODW experiences illustrate the hierarchical and asymmetrical nature of the ODW labour process. Live-in domestic work, which takes place in the private sphere is very different than work done by workers who sell their labour power in exchange for salaries in the public sphere. Hansen (1989) notes that as opposed to, say, a factory worker who rarely meets the employer (it is not necessary because the worker is supervised and kept on task "through a technical division of tasks carried out in a routine pattern and through scientific management" [p. 15]) the domestic worker is supervised directly by the employer. This results in a limited application of legal rules concerning conditions of work (if they exist). Arat-Koc and Giles (1994) similarly state that reproductive and service labour performed in the public sphere is more impersonal and more fully commoditised than such labour performed in the private sphere. Hansen (1989) adds:

> The peculiar personalness of the relationship between worker and employer in domestic service, the special nature of the work, which produces use value rather than exchange value, and the odd living arrangement combine to put servants in an ambiguous situation vis-à-vis other segments of the working class. The interpersonal aspect and domestic nature of this process also mark the experience of work as a private one (p. 15, 16).

The relationship between employers and ODWs within the confines of the employers' homes is both 'up close and personal' while at the same time greatly distanced - divided by artificially created boundaries premised on socially constructed differences, namely race, class, and gender. The nature of the ODW job is structured in such a way that differences are created and recreated as a result of the unequal power relationship between the domestic worker and the employer. Employers have the power to fire, to refuse to pay the ODWs' salaries, and to restrict the ODWs' freedoms. ODWs are isolated from other workers leaving them little or no opportunities to establish networks of information and social support. The participants in this study were nearly always under the constant gaze of the "mistress" of the household, especially in the Middle East where the employers of the participants did not work outside the house. Even at night ODWs' sleeping arrangements were in spaces accessible to everyone in the house (e.g. the laundry room, the living room, a baby's room). And because they lived with the employer and were restricted from leaving the house the ODWs were dependent upon their employers for everything from food to sanitary napkins.

Another contradiction is that ODWs are obviously present in the home but at the same time they are made absent by social practices which render them invisible. The "requisite of invisibility" is according to Katzman (1978:188) the most degrading aspect of domestic work. ODWs are supposed to be deaf to gossip and conflict and blind to employers' faults yet alert and sensitive to employers' needs and moods and undemanding about their own needs (Katzman, 1978). One of the frustrations the participants pointed out above was the lack of their own personal space and privacy while being forced to respect the employers' space and privacy. This unequal practice reinforces the ODWs' invisibility. In the small spaces of the employers' apartments in Hong Kong for example, where a family of five is nearly 'bursting the seams' of the apartment the presence of another adult person cannot be ignored. Even if the person can be ignored the presence of that body cannot be. Therefore, to make the ODW's presence as inconspicuous as possible, she is not provided with a room or furniture, which would broaden her boundary/space in the home constantly reminding the employers of her existence and her personality. Therefore her needs for privacy, a place to rest, and a place to store clothes and other personal belongings are not considered so that makeshift arrangements are made for the ODW apparently as an afterthought (often made by the ODW herself). Moreover, ODWs are expected to render themselves invisible through their spatial practices (Romero, 1992). The ODWs were permitted to be in certain areas only when their services were required there but otherwise they were restricted to the kitchen where most of the participants also ate their meals (as opposed to eating in the dining room). This eating arrangement is a further example of spatial segregation (Romero, 1992; Colen, 1989).

Another asymmetrical behaviour which reflects the unequal relations between employers and the ODW-employees is naming practices (Rollins, 1990). All participants referred to their employers as "Sir" or "Madame"/"Ma'am" (when speaking directly to them and of them) while employers referred to them either by their first names or the local equivalent of "Maid" or "nanny", such as "Congyan" (Bella), "Kadamah" (Marcie), or "Amah" (Val). Ta Ta points out that even when the female employers referred the ODW to their husbands they would use the name the ODW is expected to use (e.g. "Take this to your Sir"). As to what the employers' children called them only Ta Ta mentioned that her charges referred to her as "Auntie", which in the Philippines is a respectful term used by children for an adult woman who may not necessarily be a relative.

Wrigley (1995: 26) declares that employers want ODWs who "will demand very few of their resources, in terms of time, money, space or interaction." I contend that the social, economic, and political inequalities that are inherent in the receiving countries' policies governing the ODWs ensure that this type of "undemanding" ODW is available. An ODW who is made vulnerable and dependent through unfair labour practices and migration policies gives the employer a sense of control – control over food intake, sleep, private time, (including denial of time for spiritual reflection/religious practice), and body functions (e.g. crying as in Ta Ta's case when working in Malaysia)[1]. Anderson (2000:151) adds that ODWs "with limited access to life outside the employing family will be less likely to form relationships that intrude on the employing family." This attitude is expressed in this comment by an American who prefers to hire illegal domestic workers, "I want someone who cannot leave the country, who doesn't know anyone in New York, who basically does not have a life. I want someone who is completely dependent on me and loyal to my family." (Sontag, D. *New York Times*, cited in Chang, 2000: 109-110). Like this interviewee many of the ODWs' employers kept their ODWs isolated and dependent with no life outside the employers' families through restricting their basic freedoms.

### Racism

The process of "Othering" Filipino ODWs in host societies to set them apart from and nationals and "mistresses of the home" is a process to which many the participants referred. Although from some "Western eyes" Filipino ODWs may be lumped in with their employers as being of the same race ("Asian"), awareness of racial differences are clearly understood between ODWs and the receiving society. Participants explain that facial features, skin colour, and body structure mark the immediate visible difference. For example, Marcie explains that even when she wore what Saudi Arabian women generally wear (the black *hibiya*) Saudis could distinguish her from Arabic women: "I wore a *hibiya* but they can see you are a Filipina" because of the way it is worn and her facial features. Their distinguishable racial differences is as Roe asserts a way of ensuring that "real members" in host societies are not fooled onto treating an ODW like a citizen – "[Singaporeans] know how to [act toward] you if they know what you are." To ensure that no "fooling" goes on, clothing may be used as a further way of distinguishing ODWs from the rest of the receiving countries' population. In the Middle Eastern households participants wore modest, shapeless "housedresses" or simple cotton dresses with pastel stripes that had a belt around the waist[2]. The only exception was Marcie who made her own dresses (of a design and material that had been approved by the employer). In Hong Kong most maids wear "the domestic worker 'uniform' of blue jeans and T-shirts" (like Bella did), which is "often striking for what employers and many workers regard as its asexual, 'maidish' appearance'" (Constable, 1997: 550).

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[1] Yun (1996) and Jocano (1992) assert that ODWs in Singapore, Malaysia and Hong Kong are often denied the right to shed tears by Chinese employers because it is believed tears bring bad luck.

Only one participant, Ta Ta explains that she treated quite well by people within her Malaysian employers' community, even though she was known to be an ODW. She attributes this to the fact that because her father was Chinese Malaysian she looked "a little like Chinese" and to the fact that the community where she was working "was the birthplace village of my father". She adds that because of her family and racial ties to the place her employers were "treating me like relatives". She adds, "I am Chinese Fukyan like her [female employer]. That is why they loved me."

Other participants point out that as Filipinos they are judged negatively by their race, e.g. Mia proclaims "the Chinese people [in Singapore] are racist toward the Filipinos"... "In Singapore people think we are prostitutes and liars". But they are judged by their race in combination with their gender and class. For example, Ta Ta links class with race when she states that "because we are not rich, Kuwaiti women think we [Filipina ODWs] are slaves". Both Ta Ta and Mia believe that because of their poverty some people in receiving countries assume they would not only be willing but happy to sell sex to men. [Discussed further in section on Gender Inequalities].

When asked what makes Filipino women so much in demand as ODWs, the participants often responded with a list of positive qualities. For example, Delia asserts, "Filipinos are clean, we easily go with people, we are friendly, more educated and we speak English." Ta Ta similarly states, "Filipinos are well educated, intelligent, hardworking and practical. They are trusting and patient and clean and have nice body shapes." Bella adds, "Filipinas are easy to sell! Not sexually but because they work nicely…" Interestingly, these qualities are often stereotypical descriptions used to justify why Filipinos are "naturally" cut out for domestic work.

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[2] In Kuwait my room-mate, an Irish teacher purchased a couple of these dresses because they were inexpensive and relatively cool for the desert climate but whenever she wore them in the school the students asked her why she had to wear maid's clothing. When she went out shopping she felt people looked at her in a negative way - even with disdain.

Domestic work has been likened to slavery (Anderson, 2000), "second slavery" (Caraway, 1991: 100) or "modern day slavery" ( IDERA, 1992). Teri's experiences described above provide a good example of how domestic work can be classified as slavery as she was forced to work without pay and her basic human rights and freedoms were denied. Racism continues to make 'natural slaves' of certain people, regarding them as suited to specific work, a perfect example being domestic work. Anderson (2000: 149) explains, "Women from racialised groups, being closer to nature, are naturally good at domestic work, and domestic work in private households in the USA, Canada, Europe and the Middle East is heavily racialised." Just as St. Helenians were racialised to be "naturally" good domestic workers and were brought to work for white families in South Africa and Britain from 1945 to the late 1960s, so too are the Filipino ODWs racialised in similar ways for similar reasons in present day societies around the world. Women from Saint Helena, like my mother, were considered desirable domestic workers because their racial characteristics kept them distinguishable from the rest of society, they spoke English, had primary education, and a social life and outlook that "follows entirely the English tradition" (St. Helena Annual Report, 1934: 5, 1935: 6). Furthermore, they were perceived as "deft and polite, and admirably suited to… employment in domestic service" (St. Helena Annual Report, 1934: 6). Similarly, Filipino women are considered desirable as ODWs because of their racial characteristics which mark them as "Others", their high level of education, their ability to speak English, their "Americanised" ways (having been a colony of the USA for 40 years), and for other stereotypes, such as being "naturally good and careful at cleaning" (IDERA, 1992), clean, polite, hardworking, trustworthy (Parreñas, 2000), "'naturally' nurturing, docile, and 'good with children'" (Bakan & Stasiulis, 1997; Macklin, 1992: 700-701).

The stereotypes of the Filipino that the participants describe may well be true for some, especially as Barber (1997: 44) claims for those who "typically come from large families, which have a relatively low level of technological support" and given the identities and values Filipinos have, i.e. their work ethic and commitment to their families discussed in chapter 4. For example, Mia declares, "Filipinos are the most sought after group of workers because they have a good work ethic. We like to work. It is cultural, learned at a young age." However, although these stereotypes may be accurate for some of the participants, Parreñas (2000:176) asserts "by embracing these stereotypes [of Filipinos as hardworking, honest, clean and educated] to be true, by default, they imply that other immigrant domestic workers are not." Thus, they are supporting the "hierarchization" of racial subordinates in society. Parreñas (2000:177-178) warns that although higher education and English language ability have resulted in employers asking Filipino ODWs to tutor their children and help them with their homework, something they would never ask a "low-status domestic worker", "at most this has only taken them to the status of 'better-than-low-quality'". Chang (2000) asserts that Filipinos' culturally inscribed identities and values may play into the hands of employers eager to capture these women's "labours of love" for themselves, their families and their clients. She adds,

> Thus employers are able to exploit immigrant women's beliefs and roles that may be deeply ingrained. When these ideologies are formalised in government policy and employer practice, immigrant women are doomed to become disposable workers.

Hence I would assert that it is not just racial stereotypes on their own which result in the exploitative conditions ODWs work under but it's the laws which use race as excuse to deny ODWs full rights and freedoms which citizens in the receiving countries enjoy. Anderson (2000: 148-149) puts it this way, for migrants with a lack of citizenship status

> it is acceptable to be denied rights and employment protection, while it is not acceptable to be denied human rights on the basis of 'race' alone... In practice however, the two coincide, and the denial of human rights to 'illegal migrants' for example, is made more palatable by the fact that the majority of people to whom these rights are denied have a racialised identity.

Bakan and Stasiulis (1997: 43) further explain that exploitation of ODWs is inherent in the "precarious immigration status and the requirement to live in the employer's home, rather than in the race/ethnicity of employers and employees". However, they add, racism provides ideological justification for this exploitation. Moreover, Bakan and Stasiulis (1997) point out that within the Canadian context exploitation of ODWs of colour from South countries is not so much a result of racism but in the statuses and reasons why ODWs come to

Canada. For example, European (e.g. British or French) women are less likely to be exploited and would not tolerate exploitative work conditions because fewer of these women are entering Canada as live-in caregivers to become permanent residents, while the opposite is true for many of the women of colour from South countries. In other words, "The threat of deportation to a more affluent European country does not hold the same implications as it does to a poor Third World country." (p.44).

Bakan and Stasiulis (1997: 14) point out that "the meeting of employer preferences in appearance of the domestics is a highly racialized process." They assert that employers' capacity to select and reject domestic workers on the basis of appearance and to have their employees' change their appearance illustrates "the enormous control exercised by employers over workers in areas normally regarded to be private in capitalist wage relations" (p.15). Bakan and Stasiulis (1997: 311) who claim that racial stereotyping is "the stock and trade" of domestic work provide a Canadian example of an employer rejecting a Black domestic worker because her hair was "all in little braids". "Mary" a Filipino ODW I interviewed in Hong Kong offers another example when she declared she was humiliated and angered by her new employer's demand upon their first meeting "to hold out my hands for inspection. She [employer] said, 'Turn them over [makes sound like "hmpf"]. You are too brown and you look like a monkey.' (Personal interview with "Mary" in Hong Kong, April 29, 1998). Mary adds "I said to her well your hands look old with those veins and spots. Look [pointing to invisible spots on the back of one of her own hands]!"

The participants talk about being objectified and they themselves used language about themselves that was reflective of their objectification, which made it sound as though they were household appliances to be moved around and used where needed. For example: "She [employer] loaned me to her sister to clean her house" (Tessy); and "They [employers] took me to the mother's house and then she passed me back to the employer" (Teri). This objectification of Filipino ODWs is so prevalent that Maglipon (1990: 6) declares that in Hong Kong the adjective Filipina has become a noun which means maid: "…for a long time now the Filipina as maid has crept into the Hong Kong culture. It is common for locals and expatriates to chatter about their maids thus: 'My Filipina is very efficient. How's yours?'"

Agencies, such as *Maidlibrary.com*, specialising in Filipinas, emphasise the appearance of their products by posting photos of the maids with descriptors like "tall and strong", "good looking", "fair looking", "pleasant looking". Other stereotypical adjectives are included that have nothing to do with her ability to do the labour required and more to do with how she will do the labour (i.e. how willing she is to take orders) such as "quiet", "obedient", and "polite". Dias and Weerakoon-Goonewardene (1992: 100) assert that in Singapore "preference is given to those with fair complexion, pleasing appearance and short hair." Emphasis on the ODWs' appearances reaffirms Bakan and Stasiulis' (1997) assertion that the selection and rejection of domestic workers on the basis of appearance is a highly racialised process. Hiring/recruitment agencies stress the stereotypes that best fit the market at any given time. Hence, racialised images of ODWs will be variable and subject to reversal (Bakan and Stasiulis, 1997) depending on the source countries' availability.

Some agencies' advertisements explicitly declare that the cost of the maids depend on the maids' race/ethnicity. For example in Singapore the Filipina is the cheapest when compared to Sri Lankan and Indonesian (the latter nationality being over two times as costly as the Filipina) (PuruShotam, 1992). Advertisements by maid agencies often also use derogatory language when describing their "products" (e.g. the maids/ODWs), which depict ODWs as commodities not humans. For example a selection of Singaporean advertisements declare that their maids are "strictly controlled", "very strictly trained", and "specially picked". While the maid agencies promise "maids to fit the job", "unlimited free replacements", "cheap one time offer", "package deals", "guaranteed replacements", "free cancellation of existing maid", and "6 to 8 free monthly medical exams [for the maids] for two years". One advertisement offers potential employers to "come and see the maids" (Heyzer et al, 1992: 54-55) leaving one to wonder how the maids are displayed for viewing!

### Gender Inequalities

The domestic work occupation is female-focussed. Men (also from non-white developing countries) are hired to work in the domestic sphere as gardeners, grounds-keepers, and chauffeurs but housework and childcare are considered women's work. The relationship between employer (the woman of the house is usually the one overseeing the ODW because the private domain of the home is considered the woman's responsibility) and ODW is characterised by an intra-gender relationship of domination and subordination mediated by race and class (Schecter, 1998). Within the confines of the home, another adult woman who is always present (despite the attempts to make her "invisible" discussed above) may pose challenges to the employers but particularly to the female employer whose responsibility it is to oversee the ODW. Romero (1992: 69) elaborates on what she describes as "an on-going conflict between mistresses and domestics". She explains that "the ideology of domesticity connects women's identities to their roles as wives and mothers". To hire an ODW then is a threat to the identity/self-image of 'the woman of the house'. The homemaker feels obligated to control the domestic work even if she does not actually do the labour herself. Therefore the act of supervising becomes a "symbol of her womanhood as well as her husband's success." Similar to Schecter's (1998) observation at the beginning of this paragraph, Romero adds that as domestic service has become increasingly dominated by women of colour/migrant women "the struggle between women that was once based on class interests now has the added dimension of race and ethnicity" (p. 69).

Within this 'on-going conflict between mistresses and domestics' one of the most recurring themes mentioned by the participants was coping with jealous female employers and male employers who sexually harassed the ODWs. Within their narratives the participants often highlighted the ethnic/racial differences between themselves and their employers as important factors behind the conflicts.

### *Jealousy by female employers/Sexual harassment by male employers*

According to Delia, Bella, Val, Marcie, and Ta Ta, one of the biggest problems ODWs face in the employers' homes is female employers' jealousy of ODWs. For example, Ta Ta asserts that Filipina ODWs have more stereotypical feminine qualities than their employers, which spark female employers' jealousy. She made this observation of ODWs' lives in Kuwait:

> *...the wives are so jealous of the Filipina because the Filipina is neat and clean and has no body odour. She keeps the house all clean everywhere, inside and outside. And especially the Filipina's body structure is attractive.*

Delia states: "We [ODWs] have problems because female employers lack patience with Filipino women and they are jealous of us." Bella adds:

> *The Chinese women employers are jealous, especially when the Filipina is beautiful and knows how to dress up. But I do not think my female employer was jealous of me because I kept distance between me and the male employer. I did not talk to the [male] employer- only when the female employer was there.*

Dawn suggests that female employers will feel jealous if their ODWs wear make-up and non-conservative clothing. This she was told at her PDOS.

Marcie similarly declares that "Filipinos are clean, hard-working and patient" and describes herself as "smart looking" and "not too heavy". She states that because she endeared herself to her female employer by doing her hair and extra sewing she never experienced jealousy from the employer, even though her male employer often made "courting" moves toward her. If the female employer ever noticed her husband's attentions to Marcie she never mentioned it, tried to stop it or held Marcie responsible for it. Val's male employer also "was a little bit courting me, like that" but the female employer never expressed any feelings of jealousy because "she was not there that much".

Delia had to endure the "jealous behaviours" of someone on the job but this person didn't have a large influence on her ability to work or on her relationships with the main employers. She states simply, "One of the people in the [employers'] house was jealous of me but I didn't care."

Bella, Marcie, and Ta Ta, speak of strategies, that they employed to avoid the problems of jealousy by female employers and sexual harassment by male employers. These strategies include ignoring the unwelcomed behaviours of the male employers [and in Ta Ta's case the employer's teenaged son], avoiding being alone with the male employer (Marcie, Bella), and speaking only to the female employer (Bella).

Marcie's male employer's "courting moves" could be classified as sexual harassment, especially when he physically situated himself with his crotch against her bottom whenever she was bent over (e.g. getting something out of the oven). However, what surprised me is Marcie's insistence that when this sort of thing happens it is the women's fault. Accordingly Marcie declares, "It is up to women to protect their virginity - their chastity [because] women are susceptible to rape". To do this she suggests that women be "self-respecting" and dress and talk in a way that will not entice men. In other words, when her male employer did these sexually harassing actions it was a result of her own failures. Delia also warns that on the ODW job "there is sexual assault." She adds, "But that depends on the two people. No one can force you to have sex if you do not want." Like Marcie, Delia believes that when a woman is raped it is mainly her fault. Israel-Sobritchea (1990) declares that this kind of attitude comes from the traditional patriarchal family ideology that is based on the belief that men and women have distinct biological traits, which define their role and status in society. For instance, women being "weaker, shorter and smaller than men" (p. 13) cannot "protect themselves from physical harm" so they should restrict their movements and stay close to home. If they do get harmed/raped it is because they were too free in their movements. Israel-Sobritchea (1990) adds that the ideology also results in Filipino women striving to become the "ideal woman" – one that sacrifices for her husband and children. The "ideal woman" is not always attainable and failure to meet this expectation leads women to "self-flagellate" (de Leon, 1987, cited in Israel-Sobritchea, 1990), which includes taking the blame for their own misfortunes such as abuse and rape.

While Bella also declares that "Women are the ones who are victims of abuse, rape, physical abuse," unlike Marcie and Delia, she does not put the blame on the women. She maintains the victimisation of ODWs is largely a result of a lack of legal protection afforded to the ODWs by both the Philippines government and by the governments of the receiving countries as well as a lack of education on the part of the ODWs. She proclaims that education is the necessary tool to address this problem.

It is important to note that given their live-in unequal power relationship with their employers it may not be easy to reject seduction attempts or "courting moves", sexual assaults or rapes by employers when done in manipulative and coercive ways. Furthermore, their social environment and their often-enforced isolation from others outside the employers' home who could provide emotional support make it difficult for ODWs to "heal" from their abusive experiences. And being denied time, space, and a supportive safe environment in which to share and discuss experiences makes it difficult to politically respond to these abusive experiences. So although participants Delia and Marcie are complicit in their attitudes of sexual abuse – attitudes which clearly support the continuation of this kind of abuse - their attitudes make it even more apparent that ODWs require "education" as well as opportunities and safe environments at both the pre-departure and ODW during stages to discuss and understand the problems of sexual assault/sexual invitations/sexual abuse. Bella reminds us that these problems/issues must be understood within the wider context, not limited to the confines of the employers' homes. She points out that government policies of receiving and sending countries aggravate these problems/issues and only when this whole context is understood will ODWs be able to strategize and challenge the complicity occurring at all levels (individual, community, national and international levels).

It should be noted that some ODWs may be interested in pursuing relationships with the employer or another male member of the employer's household. Given the restrictions on their freedoms and the attitudes and policies which restrict their sexuality (discussed further below) relationships with someone within the household may appeal to some ODWs. This highlights the complexity of sexuality within the ODWs' lives during the ODW experience.

Host societies are often unreasonably suspicious of women migrant workers. Filipino ODWs are often accused of "bringing disease and vices and wrecking families" (SENTRO, 1997: 21). Some participants explain that the perception of Filipino women overseas is negatively stereotyped as prostitutes or as dishonest. Speaking from her experience Mia relates:

> *In Singapore people think we are prostitutes and liars. The [immigration] investigator asked us if we had come here to be prostitutes. I said no. But he did not believe us. He said to us, "All Filipinos are liars. So many Filipino women come to Singapore. There are so many Filipinas who are prostitutes. After they are caught they go back to the Philippines but in two months they are back here again to do prostitution."*

She adds,

> *In prison we were called "aliens". The Chinese people [in Singapore] are very racist toward the Filipinos. They think all Filipinas are prostitutes. The prison guards who were Chinese women would say bad things about us and they would beat us. ...They treated us like animals.*

Ta Ta also commented on the perception of "some people" (giving the example of an Egyptian gardener employed at the same residence she worked) who think Filipino women "will have sex for money" because "we are not rich". Illo (1995) explains that the stereotypes of Filipinas as docile and sexually submissive is a result of the succession of occupations by colonising agents and military forces.

Jocano (1992) reinforces Delia, Dawn, Marcie and Ta Ta's statements about why ODWs experience jealousy from female employers when she claims that because Filipino women are so "fashion conscious" while most Chinese women employers are "conservative" dressers the former look "more beautiful than the employer", which "makes the wife jealous and catches the husband's attention" (p. 27). Participants state that at the PDOS "They told us not to wear make-up because the women [employers] are very jealous" (Dawn). SENTRO (1997: 21) elaborates that aspiring ODWs are warned to: "tone down their looks and manner of dressing, not to use fragrances, and even not to display their innate talents and abilities while at work in a foreign country". Given the live-in arrangement, feelings of jealousy are not unusual in the ODW job and have been reported (cf. SENTRO, 1997; Jocano, 1992) but from the participants' narratives it appears that it is made much more of in the PDOS than need be. I believe the consequences of these kinds of warnings of jealousy are that the responsibility for female employers' jealousy as well as sexual assault by the male employers are the ODWs' - as if it is her fault because she did not try hard enough to 'tone down her looks', etc. Appearances and body fragrances have little to do with sexual assault and rape and everything to do with the attacker's desire to express and exert power over the victim. A further consequence is that the ODW believes she must keep her 'natural self' and her behaviours/skills/ "innate talents and abilities" in check at all times while living with the employers. This denial of self-expression of "not being who I am" (Roe), "...not do[ing] what you want" (Teri), "...not answer[ing] back!" (Roe) all contribute to a sense of low self-esteem and Bella claims it (along with abuse) also leads to psychological problems. She declares, "It is too hard to go overseas, especially with the discrimination and restrictions. They [employers in receiving countries] are stamping on us. We have four cases of psychiatric cases here after abuse overseas… they lose their self-esteem and they develop psychiatric problems." Anderson's (2000: 55) interviewees would add that ODWs' "mental problems are compounded by drudgery of domestic work, insecurity of employment, physical and sexual abuse, and being cut off from strong community networks".

SENTRO (1997: 38) suggests that by "never forget[ting] to thank or praise… the employer; or praise her for her good looks whenever combing [employer's] hair endear [the ODW] to the employer." I feel that unless this is done honestly and freely (massaging employers and combing their hair are not part of the ODW job) this suggestion may put the ODW in a vulnerable and exploitative position (some ODWs like Marcie feel obliged to perform additional emotional and physical labour then required) which establishes the ODW's inferiority. In contrast to SENTRO's suggestion to do extra special things for the employer, Kanlungan's (1997: 28) "Handbook for Filipino Domestic Workers: Destination Middle East" warns, "Don't do more than what is expected of you such as hand-washing your employers' clothes. That extra kindness and helpfulness may be abused."

### *Denial of the ODWs' mother status*

Romero (1992) points out that often ODWs are hired as "protomothers" – "they are expected to perform the emotional labor of 'mothering' both the women employers and their families" (p. 106). Yet while the participants were perceived as motherly they were rarely acknowledged as being mothers themselves. Employers rarely, if ever, acknowledged that their ODWs were mothers living apart from their children or asked about the ODWs' children. Only one participant (Teri) stated that her employer asked her about her child which made her feel "close to my employer", despite the fact that the employer was exploiting, overworking and denying sufficient food to Teri. Additionally, both Bella and Teri received shirts for their children from their employers when they left.

Many participants were forbidden to talk about their children, have family photos in their possession, write or receive letters from their children or make telephone calls to their families. As many of them were not allowed to leave the employers' homes there were no opportunities to use a public telephone or access a post box. [In the next section participants explain how they employed secretive strategies to make contact with their families.] Eelens (1995, p. 271) states that ODWs themselves claim that employers control communication between them and their families "in order to prevent them from becoming homesick and leaving prematurely". For the participants, being denied communication with their families in "a suspended state of kinlessness" (Yun, 1996: 43) not unlike forced "natal alienation" in slavery (Patterson, 1979) only exacerbated their homesickness and concern for their children, adding to their daily stress and difficulties. Ta Ta explains: "I was so emotional. Maybe that is the avenue for all single parents [to be] so emotional. Always crying. Whenever I saw an aeroplane, I wished I could go home right away to see my children." Dawn similarly states: "At first it was very hard. I would cry because I could not do the things I wanted to do and I was homesick. I missed my family." Whatever the reason or excuse for cutting the ODW off from her family the outcome was a grievous separation and an example of how ODWs are denied their right to their motherhood status[3].

By ignoring the needs of the ODW and refusing to acknowledge that ODWs have real characters as individuals as well as personal lives, especially children that they love even more than the employers' children the employers are dehumanising the ODW. For all the participants who are mothers being separated from their children was one of the most difficult aspects of going overseas and the denial of their mother status was like rubbing salt into an open wound. Of course it must be noted that the denial of family life to ODWs is not merely an attitude of employers but is state sanctioned through immigration policies which ensure that the ODWs are spatially divided from their families by not allowing them to bring their families with them when they migrate as ODWs.

It appears that the sexuality of the ODW is on the one hand very noticeable when employers are expressing their jealousy of her and/or sexually harassing her, yet on the other hand the ODW is treated as an asexual being. ODWs are discouraged from meeting others outside the employers’ homes and developing intimate relationships or friendships with others. As they do not have any privacy in their place of residence, even at night, nor opportunities to leave the employers’ homes or even talk on the telephone the ODWs are treated as asexual or child-like beings. Marcie gives an example of when she answered the telephone at her employers: “I did not know my employer was listening behind me. It was a man on the telephone. He wanted to be my friend. I didn’t know him. My employer was so angry her face turned yellow. She asked, “What is his name? How did he get this number?’ but I lied and told her it was a girl.” Marcie was “interrogated” for three days about this telephone call.

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[3] It should be noted that some ODWs feel under pressure to misrepresent their marital and parental status when applying for the ODW job as a result of the conveyance of the message that employers prefer unencumbered employees. (cf. Arat-Koc, 1992; West Coast Domestic Workers' Association, 1989).

Some participants felt they were very much treated like children but treated with less respect than the employers’ children received. Examples of this treatment include being scolded by the employers, being “protected” (protectiveness was the reason given to explain why Dawn was not allowed out of the house without the employers), being told when to turn off her light (as in Roe’s case), when to go to sleep and when to wake up, being told how to dress and how to wear one’s hair (Dawn, Ta Ta), being told what, when, and where to eat, being slapped, kicked, shouted at or having hair pulled for misdemeanours (Teri, Cher, Tessy, Tonnette, and Bella), and constantly being told what to do and what not to do. The ODWs’ state of dependence on the employers for basic needs further reinforce the employers’ paternalistic attitude toward them. This attitude was reflected in the following statement made by the Mr. Al-Muhaini, Director of Investigations from the Ministry of Interior of Kuwait, who when told employers should not hold ODWs’ passports replied: “If an employer keeps the passport it is only so the employee won’t lose it… It is just as we treat our children… – it’s the same thing with the maids” (MEWWRP, 1992: 6)[4]. Teri strongly denies that her female employer was looking after her own best interest when she took away her family photo album, marriage certificate, college transcripts and special documents but rather she was showing “that she can do what she wants [to me and] she did not care about [me].”

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Therefore, it is assumed that these women who misrepresent their marital and parental status are under additional stress to maintain the secrecy about their families.

A further example of how ODWs' sexuality is regulated by state policy is the law which operates in present day Singapore requiring ODWs undergo regular pregnancy tests to ensure that they do not bear children whilst working as an ODW. If ODWs become pregnant by Singaporean men they would have no legal claims against them because they are prohibited from marrying Singaporean citizens (Yun, 1996). This is a good example of how ethnic-racial stratification is used to ensure that Filipino ODWs do not have grounds for obtaining permanent resident status and thus debasing the ethnic-racial composition of the receiving society (Cheng, 1999). Devraj (2002) reports that Taiwanese laws forbid migrant workers, who are mainly employed in factories, domestic work or in farms in rural areas, from getting pregnant. In Malaysia the laws may not explicitly forbid migrant workers from getting pregnant but Netto (2002:1-2) states that "some workers say their contract states they cannot become pregnant during service in factories or in domestic work." Furthermore, even if it is not written in the contract an ODW's pregnancy could be classified as "serious misconduct" and would therefore be grounds for dismissal. Netto reports a senior officer of the immigration department in Penang as saying that if a domestic worker's pregnancy shows up in her annual mandatory medical check-up she would be deemed "unfit" to work and would either be sent back to her country of origin or not have her contract extended. Netto claims that fear of termination of contract and deportation are the main reasons for pregnant ODWs seeking abortions, which are "widely available in Malaysia although rarely done in government hospitals" (p.2) at a cost ranging from 100 to 300 ringgit (US$26 to 79).

### Intercultural barriers and understanding

Going to a new country which one has learned little about (except through self-study and perhaps through PDOS, although as we have seen in Chapter 5 cultural aspects are not covered in great detail in most PDOSs) caused all of the women to feel apprehensive, "nervous" and "afraid" on their journey to their new jobs and in their first moments when meeting their employers as well as for their first few days or weeks. All of the women who had gone to the Middle East mentioned their fear of having their bags searched and having

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[4] Foreign workers in Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates are required to surrender their passports to their employers or sponsors (Commission for Filipinos Overseas, Dept. of Foreign Affairs, 1997).

something unknowingly illegal confiscated. Two mentioned that they had brought rosary beads with them, which they worried would be taken away. Marcie, Val, Delia and Dawn did not bring bibles on the advice given at the PDOS and/or the recruiters, although Ta Ta declares, "I knew [Kuwait] was not a Christian country but I still bought my bible anyway. I hid it really in my bag. I wrapped it in my dresses in the suitcase where it cannot be seen."[5]

Ta Ta describes her first impressions of Kuwait.

> *I knew nothing about Kuwait and I had no friends there. I was very scared, because these [Muslim] women were all wearing black – even their faces were covered. Because in the Philippines women are wearing nothing on their heads, well only religious people and I arrived there and oh, what are they doing? What is this country? And when I passed over it from the plane I saw, oh there are no trees! [Laughs] "How can you survive in this country?" I asked [myself] without knowing they have the oil. When I arrived I was amazed and stunned.*

For many of the participants the fear and apprehension did wear away somewhat over time as they adjusted to their surroundings and culture. However, cultural differences between the employers and the ODWs continued to cause frustration, disagreements and misunderstandings. Specifically, language was a problem between ODWs and their employers and families. Communication problems due to a lack of a common language were the main problems for Bella, Val, and Tonnette although they also cite religious differences, food differences, as well as clashes in personalities, and a general lack of trust.

Bella declares she never felt close to her employers partly because of language problems but also because of personality differences:

> *The mother [the female employer] was not good, not nice or kind and she did not speak English. Sometimes they talked about me a lot... I ignored it in case they were saying bad words. The male employer did not speak in English very well either but he tried....*

Val talks of religious and language differences when she compares her two ODW jobs. She explains her relationship with her first employers (in Saudi Arabia) was very good:

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[5] Kuwaiti immigration officials do not confiscate bibles. My personal observation is that in fact bibles are sold freely at English bookstores, however, it is advised that ODWs "Avoid bringing items that offend the culture... Saudi Arabia for example prohibits the bringing in to the country of non-Islamic religious articles such as bibles, rosaries, prayer books" (Kanlungan, 1997:20).

> *I had good employers. He was a doctor, an ophthalmologist. His wife was also a doctor. The children liked me very much. I was close to the kids. They were quite good because they were Egyptian. They were Christian. They weren't Saudi, like strict Muslim. I could share my God with them and they would not get angry. Even now my employer is ringing me here to go back. I consider myself a lucky one because I had a good employer but for many OCWs they have a different story.*

In her second job she felt that her relationship with her female employer was "close" despite the employers' inability to speak English, her "different religion", and her frequent false accusations – all of which, but especially the latter led Val to quit:

> *We had problems communicating because they do not speak English only Chinese. The children and parents and I were close but the employer was Buddhist and I prefer Christian employers. [Another thing], if ever there was something she misplaced she blamed me. She blamed me that I stole her clothes but actually I found out those clothes are in the drawer of her husband...so I quit.*

Tonnette briefly details her relationship with her four Kuwaiti employers:

> *The first employers' children were very bad - always hitting and pinching me. Maltreatment from them all the time! The sir [male employer] was no good either. He was always shouting at me and loud! The second employer - she did not maltreat me and she could speak both Arabic and English but I do not like old women. The third employers' children were no good but the parents were good. I could speak a little Arabic then. There were four children. It was very difficult. The fourth employers were very nice to me and the two children were good. They were both dentists. They were young people. They gave me freedom.*

Tonnette declares, "It is not easy to work in the Middle East", but she believes the youthfulness and higher level of education of employers impacts positively on the way they relate to their ODWs citing her fourth employers as examples.

In her first employment in Singapore Roe declares that language was not an issue, but she feels that it is part of the Chinese cultural to treat ODWs like "dogs":

> *The first employers were very bad. A Chinese family. They spoke English and shouted at me and said bad words at me. They treated me like a dog. ...I learned [at PDOS] that Chinese people are difficult to work for. Chinese people are cold and cruel. They are too proud. It is difficult to get close to them... I know its true. I complained to a friend. She said, "Just be patient. Don't answer back!" I cried in my room. I sacrificed a lot in that job.*

As mentioned in Chapter 5, Roe's PDOS did warn her of the "cruelty" of Chinese people and although an unfair stereotype Roe declares her experiences only confirmed what she learned at PDOS. She, like Val, believes that the "whiter", more "Americanised", or "European" the employers, the better the treatment ODWs will receive. Val also adds that the closer the employers' habits and religion are to the Filipino ODW's the fewer the conflicts will occur. Roe describes her second employment in Singapore:

> *The second employers were good.... My employers are German. He was a principal of a school and she was a nurse at the university. I had freedom and privacy. The foreigner is not like [the] Chinese.*

Similar to Roe's and Val's comments, Ta Ta says (of her third employers), "Maybe I was so lucky to have a good employer who is American oriented. He studied psychology. He is still a Kuwaiti but Americanised." Of her future employer she says, "I have applied to go to Brunei... The British are opening a hotel... They [British] are good. Not like Arabs."

Cher describes her relationship with her Malaysian employers, emphasising that language was not an issue:

> *They could speak English. The children were nice but the mother was very bad. She was a housewife and home all day with me. She pulled my hair three times a day. She gambled [like] Chinese do and whenever she lost she got mad and shouted and maltreated me. The father was OK. He was a manager for a Jakarta company. I do not understand the attitude [of the female employer].*

Teri describes her relationship with her first employer in Singapore:

> *Both my employers spoke English. The woman [employer] was very good. She asked me about my family. She asked about my son and gave me gifts to take to him when I left. I was very close to my employer. The sister of my employer was very bad. She said that I was no good and other bad things to me.*

She says this of her second employers, expressing her fear of them:

> *The second employer was no good. They are always shouting and swearing like, "Bull Shit!" and slapping and kicking me. I was maltreated. Maltreatment everyday! My [male] employer is a big boss working for a syndicate. They [the husband and wife] were always quarrelling about money. I was affected because of the shouting. All the maids are always so scared. He could kill me anywhere in Singapore. The*

> *employer's brother always said he would kill me [too] if anything happened to the baby. [He shouted] "I will kill you!"*

I suspect that Teri's employer and employer's brother made these threats about killing Teri if anything happened to the baby given the popular discourse surrounding the Filipino ODW Flor Contemplacion's execution which occurred less than a year before Teri began working for the family. However, I believe the making of death threats to Teri who was innocent of doing any harm to the baby was indefensible and done mainly to demonstrate the power they held over her.

Many of the participants' stories about their poor relationships with their employers, especially those which involved abuse shocked me. Although the negative experiences outnumbered the positive experiences there were a few participants who shared stories of their good relationships with employers. In addition to Roe's second employment and Tonnette's fourth employment (described above) two more participants, Dawn and Ta Ta shared positive experiences of their relationships with their employers.

Dawn says she felt she had a "good" relationship with her female employer in particular and also with the young children she cared for, especially the babies she helped raise from their infancy although she states, "At first it was very hard. I would cry because I could not do the things I wanted to do. I couldn't go out and I was homesick. I couldn't speak Malay." Once the language barriers were lessened (as Dawn learned to speak Malay) she became closer to the family, "The lady employer was close to me. I would tell her my problems".

In Ta Ta's second job, which was in Malaysia, she states she had a "positive" relationship with her female employer who was "very compassionate to me" and bought her the foods she wanted (providing they were healthy foods). She had no complaints about the children. Ta Ta also emphasised that there were cultural similarities with her Malaysian employer who was Chinese Malaysian. Ta Ta declares, "She [employer] was Chinese Fukyan like me so she was kind to me." Ta Ta's father's culture was the same as her employers. Ta Ta describes her employer as both sisterly and motherly. On occasion the employer would make jokes about her husband with Ta Ta in front of the husband, which contributed to a sense of sisterhood, while at other times the employer (who was about 10 years younger than Ta Ta) would take on a maternal role and offer advise to Ta Ta or buy her special treats.

Cultural differences in diet were a source of strife for both ODWs and their employers. ODWs had to prepare food to the employers' specifications and no choices (with the exception of Ta Ta) were given about what foods they would to like to eat and how they would prefer it to be cooked so that some of the participants chose to go without. This problem is confirmed by Jocano (1992) who adds that ODWs' main complaint about Chinese employers' food in Singapore and Malaysia was having porridge (*lugao* in Filipino) for regular meals and that Indonesian, Indian, Singaporean and Malaysian foods were too hot and "peppery". Lack of sufficient food was also an issue and as four participants (Teri, Val, Roe, and Bella) lost between 5 and 11 kilograms each and two participants (Teri and Roe) felt unable to function because of a lack of nutrition so the food/diet issue is no trivial matter.

### *Language learning*

According to many of the participants one of the positive aspects of working in another culture was learning a new language, which they claim gives them added confidence, broke down the barriers between them and their employers and provided them with useful skills for future ODW jobs. Most of the participants talked of learning informally about the host culture and language mainly through the employers and more commonly through the employers' children. For example, for ODWs like Cher, who were confined to the home and denied the freedom to go outside, the children in their care became their main source of exposure to the culture. Cher states, "I was busy with the three children all the time so I learned a little about Malaysia from them, but I never left the house. I never went out so I didn't know very much about what Malaysia is like." Similarly, Tessy asserts: "I did not have any time or opportunity to learn about Singapore because I was too busy." Dawn who was working in Brunei and never allowed out of the house for two years claims that most of her learning came from being completely immersed in the new language/culture of the employers' home. She states, "I was forced to learn Malay. My employers spoke only

Malay and they spoke it to me. The children also spoke to me in Malay and they taught me. I found there are similarities with Malay and Tagalog, like for example the word for rice is the same [in both languages]." She explains how this learning experience and her growing confidence with the Malay language changed her: "Before I was shy and ashamed to speak but I learned to talk especially to my employers. I learned to express myself." After two years she was eventually allowed to go out of doors but only with the employers' family members. These brief outings to shops allowed her to see how other Bruneians went about their daily lives. She adds, "I also learned to dress conservatively. In conservative clothes [like the Brunei women]." Roe maintains that through her ODW jobs she received a good base of three new languages. "I learned languages from the employer like German and from my friend I learned Malaysian and from my first employer's kid I learned Chinese." Tonnette states: "I learned Arabic from my employers. I didn't know any [Arabic] before."

Ta Ta talks about her knowledge of languages and ability to pick up new languages with pride,

> *My father never spoke to me in Chinese so I don't know Chinese but I can listen and learn. In Hong Kong and Malaysia I learned a little Chinese. I speak Tagalog, Ilango, English and Visayans. I can speak the dialect of many other Filipinos. I am a flexible woman in attitude. When I meet other women from anywhere I can soon pick up what they are saying. Even when I return here [to the Philippines] my friends say that I sound different because I pick up the sounds from the other speakers in other countries. In Kuwait I learned a little Arabic but I do not like this language. I can speak a little.* Shway, shway. *[Little, little]. It is like a tongue twister!*

Val declares, "I just learned to adapt to the culture in both Saudi and Taiwan by watching TV and by being with the kids in Saudi." Other participants, Delia, Tessy, Roe, and Tonnette acknowledged that when they were permitted to watch TV they learned something of the host country's language.

*Learning about cultures outside of the host country*

Teri, Ta Ta, and Val had opportunities to experience other cultures through travelling, although in Teri's case her ability to observe and learn new things around her was limited. She explains: "I travelled to Japan, Malaysia and Australia with the employer. I saw a lot of different countries but I was always busy with the baby so it was not a vacation and not time to see and learn [new things]." In contrast Val had ample opportunity to learn from being "a tourist": "When [the employers] had a vacation they let me go with them. I went on vacation with them to Egypt for two months. They toured me everywhere in Egypt. I saw so much of their country and [way of] life. They were good to let me go with them."

Ta Ta's travels were not with her employers. They were with her recruiters/traffickers on the way to illegal jobs overseas. She admits that there were times when the risks made her fearful but she also declares, "I was scared but it was so exciting, you know?" In fact during her stay in a temporary refugee camp (where she stayed 15 days) in Jordan at the first few weeks of the Gulf War she felt both happiness and fear: "We were happy there. It was not so tense. It was like there was not a war at all, as if it was a field trip. But the tensions during that war, really, [especially] in Kuwait and Iraq the mixed emotions, the fear that you cannot go home, just imagine."

### Summary of economic oppression, spatial deference, racism, gender and intercultural barriers

The work circumstances were structured in such a way that the women's basic human rights were vulnerable to violation. In summary, the violations participants reported were that employers took possession of the ODWs' passports (which restricts freedom of movement); unlawfully deducted from salaries; delayed, underpaid or did not pay wages; substituted contracts; did not provide adequate living conditions; behaved abusively (physically, psychologically, sexually and verbally); did not provide sufficient nourishment; breached the contract; forced the ODW to work unregulated working hours; did not provide sufficient health care; enforced isolation; and restricted communication with family. These sorts of violations have been documented in studies of ODWs in many countries (cf. Abera-Mangahas, 1996; Brigham, 1995; Brigham, 1999; Lim & Oishi, 1996; Osteria, 1994; Silvera, 1989; Stalker, 1994). These studies also highlight other negative outcomes for the ODW, which include: mental stress or breakdown, rape, death by torture, starvation, or murder.

The ODW phenomenon demonstrates how gender shapes the women's experiences from the sexual division of labour within the household and within the nation to the international sexual division of labour, as their reproductive labour is moved from their own homes to the homes of richer foreign employers in wealthier countries. In addition to gender race, class, and the unequal distribution of wealth on a global scale all interact to impact on the women's experiences. Throughout the migration process the states of both the Philippines and the receiving countries play a crucial role in creating the hierarchy in which the ODWs live and work. Often with no pretence of being neutral the policies of the receiving countries are sexist, racist and classist so that ODWs' quality of life is greatly affected for the worse. Policies reinforce differences and divisions between ODWs and employers so that the balance of power tips in favour of the employers leaving ODWs vulnerable to exploitation and abuse.

However, the unique nature of the ODW work arrangement is such that even the "good" employer's desire to be fair to his/her ODW is restricted by the unequal relationship between employer and ODW, which is reinforced and exacerbated by state policies. One example is the bonds which the employer in Singapore must put up for the ODW "sets up the employers as security officers, thus emphasising not only their power over the maids but also implying state sanction for this power" (Yun, 1996, p. 41). Furthermore, even "good" employers are reproducing the hierarchy of inequality that exists in the receiving countries' societies. Rollins (1985) states that the presence of a domestic worker supports the ideal of unequal human worth. ODW work is given inferior status as it is considered to have no value in the receiving countries' societies and the treatment that ODWs receive is demeaning whilst the employers' status is raised. Bose (1980) adds, the social class of the domestic worker remains impervious to the social position of her employers and is, in any case, lower than that of a housewife of any class.

What is striking is the amount of violations/abuse that some of the participants tolerated, which they explain is because they knew they were taking risks when they agreed to go overseas so when violations/abuse occurs they say, "Well, it was my choice to take risks and now I'll suffer the consequences." Although the ODWs who go through PDOS are often told of the potential risks and discomforts they are rarely told how to deal with violations and abuse. Chanting "Prepare for the worst" (as occurs in PDOS offered by KAIBIGAN) does nothing to actually prepare them for the worst.

### Resistance and empowerment

Although the participants allude to the unequal power relationships and the potential risks and dangers that are a part of live-in domestic employment, they also give examples of exerting "everyday resistance" (Gramsci, 1971) and in some cases mobilising against injustice to make structural changes in the ODWs' work/living circumstances.

The theme of resistance and empowerment helps us to better understand the participants' dynamic positions in society; where individually and in groups they are social actors/agents and desiring subjects; where their acts of refusing to accept and conform to the powers that be in everyday life are seen as significant and demonstrate a challenging of the social and political status quo. These are indicators that their actions are acts of resistance.

In this theme empowerment is defined in terms of transforming self and society. Borrowing from Stromquist (1988) and Banks (1991) I assert that ODWs' empowerment takes place at the cognitive, psychological, and economic levels. ODWs become empowered as they develop knowledge, skills and values to become social critics. They develop critical awareness of cultural, social and legal aspects of society that impact on their position as women in society. Psychologically, the ODWs develop self-esteem and confidence in their abilities to lead, solve problems, and make decisions. Economically, ODWs need to be able to improve their living conditions and provide themselves and their families financial security. In sum, empowered ODWs "critically appropriate knowledge existing outside their immediate experience in order to broaden their understanding of themselves, the world, and the possibilities of transforming the taken-for-granted assumptions about the way we live" (McLaren, 1989: 131). They make reflective decisions and implement their decisions in effectual personal, social, political, and economic action.

These ODWs' acts of resistance highlights the social processes, tensions, contradictions and complexities experienced by the ODWs that have a potential for change. Their strategies and tactics have been wide-ranging, from the passive non-violent, (i.e. secretly defying the employer's demands) to active non-violent (i.e. challenging the employer to dismiss her) to collective acts, such as public protests and rallies. The participants' acts of resistance are divided into three categories: Passive non-violence, active non-violence, and collective resistance/NGO activities. Specific acts to which I have given a classification are grouped within each category as outlined below:

**(a). Passive Non-violence:**

i. Hidden defiance- defying the employer's demands to cease certain activities (i.e. praying to God, reading the bible, writing letters to family in the Philippines, or using the telephone) by doing these activities secretly. Also teaching the employers' children forbidden songs and prayers in a language not understood by the employers (i.e. English or Filipino) so that the employers do not know what the children are reciting/singing/learning;

ii. Bonding intensification - treating the children as their own, creating a loving bond between employers' children and themselves;

iii. "Cognitive alteration" (Cohen, 1991) Believing they are better than the employer (morally and physically);

iv. Integrity maintenance;

v. Selected ignorance

vi. Escaping the employer's house/ "running away";

**(b). Active non-violence:**

i. Complaining to the hiring agency;

ii. Reporting the employer to the authorities;

iii. Talking back to the employer;

iv. Speaking out

v. Quitting (legally terminating the contract);

**(c). Collective resistance/NGO activities** (in countries where organising is allowed)

i. Public protests- becoming politically visible in pubic protests, marches and rallies

ii. Joining NGOs for friendship/companionship and supporting/creating/organising in solidarity for change for all domestic workers.

These acts of resistance are described below.

**(a). Passive Non-violence:**

i. Hidden defiance. This is secretly continuing activities forbidden by the employer. In all the examples below the women did not openly challenge the employers' oppressive demands, but as the forbidden activities were so meaningful to the ODWs' quality of life they covertly continued them using inventive strategies. They took risks to practice Christianity either by praying, reading the bible or teaching the employers' children Christian songs and prayers in a language the employer does not understand.

With mirth Marcie tells of her cunning:

> *I taught the youngest how to pray and I taught her how to sing "Our Father who art in Heaven" in Tagalog. She was 4 years old. Nobody knew what she was saying. Her mother asked, "What are you teaching my daughter?" so I said, "Oh, it is just a song". [Laughs]. Filipinos have spread the gospel around the world.*

Val felt it was it was her Christian duty to "share God's words and blessings" with whomever she could, including her Muslim employer despite the trepidation of being caught practising her religion and facing the consequences. She gives this example of the fear of being caught with a bible in Saudi Arabia:

> *I did not have a bible to read because when you go through customs [in Saudi Arabia] and immigration, they will look through your things and take it. It could be trouble so on the advice of the PDOS I did not take a bible. They advise you not to take one.*

The practising of their religion is very important to the majority of the participants and although it was possible for them to practise secretly and without a bible, the ODWs felt it necessary to push the limits in some way. This was done despite the penalty they may receive from the employer, the state or both.

Marcie, a Christian was caught praying in the employer's non-Christian home. She explains the incident and how she dealt with the employer's prohibition on symbols of Christianity:

> *I was praying in my room [the laundry room] and the employer came in. She saw me sitting with my legs crossed and she said, "What are you doing? Are you crazy? You are crazy!" So [from then on] I prayed inside the bathroom. They wanted me to convert to Islam. They talked to me about the Koran. I only listen, but [had no intention of converting]. I had no bible because it is not allowed, but I had a ring rosary, which I kept hidden.*

Employers commonly demanded that the ODWs cease all communication with their families by telephone and by sending letters. Yet the ODWs found ways of resisting this demand. For example, using the employer's telephone was strictly forbidden as was the case for Dawn who states, "I could never use the telephone, so I kept in touch with my family only through secret calls [made on the employers' phone] and through letters."

Tonnette, Tessy and Teri explain how they were able to send letters home only by secretive means, with the assistance of other Filipino ODWs working in neighbouring homes:

> Tonnette: *My friend [another domestic worker] would mail my letters for me. When I went out to the garbage I saw my friend. I spoke only one minute, said "Hello" and threw the letter to her. It was a secret. She had freedom.*
>
> Tessy: *I only wrote letters to my family. My friend, a Filipino maid mailed them for me and sometimes my employer would send them for me.*
>
> Teri: *I only wrote some letters [in secret] and took them out with the garbage. I gave them to a maid, another Filipina, a friend, outside when we are emptying the garbage. She mailed them for me.*

Marcie was not strictly forbidden to write letters home in fact on occasion, like Tessy, her employer would mail them for her, yet she too could only use the employer's telephone without the employer's knowledge: "I corresponded with my family by writing letters. The Filipino driver or the employer would mail them for me. I used the employer's phone sometimes when they were not at home, but it was too expensive."

The participants frequently mentioned how vital it was for them to be able to communicate with their families and send money home by post no matter what the risks. The consequences of being caught included physical and verbal abuse, threats of being fired and sent back to the Philippines, and having their salary withheld. Receiving mail from home was contentious but a source of solace and comfort to a homesick overseas worker.

ii. Bonding intensification. This is consciously forming an "Auntie" or surrogate mother bond with the employers' children, which provides both the family and the ODW rewards and correspondingly helps to secure the ODW's position.

For ODWs who have been with a family for a long time and have seen the employers' children grow over the years, particularly from babyhood to school age, it is not unusual for a very strong bond to develop between ODW and the children for whom they are responsible. However, bonding with the children is not a process, which 'just naturally occurs'. Some ODWs may consciously choose not to get too close to the children, either because the children are not very likeable (Tonnette, Ta Ta, Delia), the ODW cannot relate to the children "because they come from two different worlds" (Delia, Bella), or to protect themselves from grief when the separation inevitably occurs. Tessy also explains that she could not get attached to the children in her care nor the twin babies of her employer's sister-in-law she was responsible for a lot of the time because of too much stress and work. There was only time to meet their basic needs and no time to bond/ play with them. Others consciously choose to "treat the employers' children like their own" (Val) so that over time, the close relationship develops ensuring the ODW's job and keeping her in good favour with the parents (although some participants noted complications –e.g. employers' jealousy of the ODW's relationship with the child). In addition, the close bonds provide reciprocal personal rewards, such as feeling loved and cherished for both the child and the ODW. This bond may help the ODW deal with her pining for her own children and other family members in the Philippines.

Val had a good relationship with her employers' children, which ensured that she gained her employer's trust:

> *My employer trusted me very much. Even I treated the kids like they were my own family, nothing more or nothing less because I consider myself part of their family so really I am easily trusted.*

Dawn worked for a Brunei family of seven for five years and during that time two babies were born. She was with the children around the clock (she slept in the same room with the youngest children) and in addition to doing all the housework she helped raise the children and formally taught them as well. She declares, "I know these kids like they are my own". Indeed she came to know them far better than her own three children whom she left in the Philippines when they were 5, 3 and 2 years old. After returning home five years later her own children hardly knew her. Through the close relationship and bond with her employers' children Dawn received trust, love and job security, as it was obvious her charges and employer were as attached to her as she was to them.

Tessy was close to the children at her second employer's and regrets having left her son when he was "only a baby" because he did not know her when she returned. She expresses the sadness of bonding with children not her own at the detriment of not sustaining the bond with her own child. She notes that the effort to bond with the employers' children had been really worthwhile, as it was a way of getting what she wanted– "some respect from the employer".

Marcie also believes that partly due to her bond with her charges she had the employer "under her thumb".

The perception of ODWs "being treated as one of the family" has been discussed by many scholars who conclude that it enforces and perpetuates inequalities between ODWs and employers (cf. Bakan and Stasiulis, 1997; Cock, 1980; Gregson and Lowe, 1994; Romero, 1992; Wrigley, 1995; Young, 1987). This conclusion is arrived at because of 1) the feudalistic roots of servants tied to their masters for life; 2) it blurs the line between worker and family member making it difficult for the worker to negotiate for better working conditions; 3) employers can manipulate workers into doing additional unpaid labour; and 4) it ignores the existence of the ODWs' families.

Yet, Parreñas (2000) points out that the intimacy within which the ODW works can be (as Marcie and Tessy suggested) used to the ODWs' advantage. Because employers have a great deal invested in treating ODWs like one of the family they are "made vulnerable by the threats wrought by intimacy such as child neglect and property violations. Thus, employers may find themselves having to treat their domestic workers 'like human beings' and not just labor-producing machines" (p. 185), which is Parreñas' (2000) participants' reason for enjoying the concept of "being treated as one of the family". To them being treated like one of the family meant they were more likely to be treated as a human being, receive more respect, which in turn de-emphasised servitude.

Furthermore, as Dawn indicated above, attachment is not a one-way street. Just as ODWs may become attached to their charges, employers (children and adults alike) also become attached to their ODWs. This attachment as Dill (1994) observed can be taken advantage of by the ODW to cope with the demands of the job. Val and Dawn claim that for them the attachment resulted in more trust and job security. Dill adds that the requirement of "pouring love", which is perceived as a central duty to caretaking is not an emotional bond which employers can easily manipulate. Parreñas (2000) maintains that domestic workers are able to maintain a degree of emotional detachment from their emotional labour. Tonnette makes it clear that she had no attachment to the children she cared for in her first and third jobs in Kuwait. She describes the children as "very bad" and "no good". Delia had no complaints about the children in her first job, in fact she states that "the kids were nice to me" but does not elaborate on her feelings toward them.

iii. Cognitive alteration: Believing they are morally, academically and physically better than the employers. When being put down on the job ODWs find it beneficial to remind themselves that they are equal to or "above" their employers in various ways. Ta Ta, Bella, Val, Tessy and Tonnette feel that their ability to speak English well – better than the employers- is something of which Filipino ODWs should be proud. Delia, Val, Dawn, Bella, Tessy, Teri and Marcie all hold college degrees, which they feel places them academically on par or above their employers. Ta Ta asserts that in addition to the fact that Filipino women are generally more educated than Kuwaiti women they are more fit, more attractive, have better personal hygiene and are cleaner than Kuwaiti women:

> *How come the Kuwaiti women become so big? They just lie down there on the sofa and no wonder they will not work anymore because they have Filipinas to do everything. They think that Filipinas are slaves. They lay down and say to the Filipinas, 'Bring me this and bring me that'. They have no exercise!*

The participants also resort to using racist stereotypes of their employers when describing them. One example is the "big and lazy Kuwaiti woman" (Ta Ta). Other stereotypes include: Middle Eastern men are sex fiends (Marcie); the Chinese talk but never follow through with their obligations (Tessy), always gamble (Ta Ta, Tessy, Teri), eat repulsive undercooked food in small quantities (Tessy, Bella, Val), are racist (Mia), and always treat their ODWs "like dogs" (Roe); and employers who are "like whites", "Americanised" or European are "very good employers" (Val, Ta Ta, Roe). Ta Ta also believes that Kuwaiti men are more likely to be better educated than Kuwaiti women are (although according to UNESCO, 2000 there is equal number of females as males educated at the secondary level and in fact more women than men educated at the tertiary level). "Because the men are more educated, they know that Filipino women need respect."

iv. Integrity maintenance. This is the ODW continuing to do quality work or working even more efficiently, professionally and diligently despite a lack of praise for or recognition of her work. She may attempt to prove her worth many times over by demonstrating her intelligence and capabilities through her activities, such as learning a new language, teaching English to the children, or providing services and skills to the employer, such as hairstyling or dressmaking. The reasons for this are to prove to herself in particular but also to her employer that she is doing her best and therefore can maintain her integrity and her self-esteem no matter what negative things others may say about her. In addition she hopes to eventually get recognition, praise, respect and trust as well as some measure of independence.

For example, Val felt she could take pride in her work despite her difficult work conditions and circumstances. She asserts she could tolerate without complaint being overworked and underpaid and she is willing to continue doing her best work, as long as she receives some signs of respect and trust from the employer.

> *When I was there in Taiwan I did not have a day off. My day off was overtime. I worked overtime everyday but I received no overtime pay! Nothing. The only thing I do not want is for her to accuse me [of any wrong doings]. I am very patient. I have patience for those works, but, it is OK I understand [why the employer works me so hard]. I am not waiting for the extra [money] only thing I wanted is that she treated me with respect and trust.*

However, she declared that when her integrity is brought into question her tolerance and patience would expire. After being falsely accused of stealing some clothing, Val believed her honesty would always be in doubt by the employer and in turn Val's ability to maintain her integrity would be in jeopardy, consequently Val decided to quit.

Marcie illustrates another example. Even though Marcie experienced many hardships on the job, she could always take pride in the extra services she provided to the employer's family. She complacently declares that she made "every pillow in the [employer's] house" and as well she made many articles of clothing for the employer. She also styled her employer's hair. Marcie believed that in return for these achievements she gained respect and some measure of autonomy, particularly in the kitchen – "I managed the kitchen, so I could do what I liked with the food [give it away and eat as much as I wished]." Hence, even before her employers began to demonstrate their trust and appreciation for Marcie's labour, Marcie felt her integrity was intact because she was doing her best.

v. Selected ignorance for protection – being able to ignore the employer's hurtful comments by refusing to learn the language of the employers. Bella elucidates:

> *I am not interested in learning Chinese because I am thinking if they are talking in Chinese and they get angry at me, I do not want to know what they are saying about me, in case it hurts me. So I did not care because I did not understand. Sometimes they talked about me a lot. My sister-in-law told me that "Congyan" means maid, so I knew they are talking about me when I heard "Congyan". I ignored it in case they were saying bad words.*

The ODW may also choose to ignore employers' (and employers' children's) unwelcome behaviours rather than choose face-to-face confrontation.

> Ta Ta: *Only the oldest [child] was not good. He is a male and you know males are so aggressive. One time only, he did it to me. He let me see his penis was erecting. ... He was wearing the short white, like the Chinese wear, with no jockey [underwear]. He was walking like that [demonstrates walking sideways while keeping eyes on me, using her finger as a simulated penis held out in front of her] to let me see his penis. I just ignored him. He was just testing me.*
>
> Marcie: *There was one experience... I was on the terrace, which is an extension of the kitchen. I was cooking out there and the male employer was in the kitchen. He closed the door to the kitchen when I was out in the terrace. His look at me was different and I wasn't comfortable so I went back out to the terrace for 10 minutes. I peeped in until it was time to go [back to the kitchen], because the food was cooked. Somehow as I was backing up, he was behind me so my backside was against his front crotch area. He smiled differently at me. Then after that he started inviting me fishing and swimming. I thought he meant with the children but he meant alone with him. I thought to myself, why is he inviting me? After that I didn't want to be alone with him. Sometimes the female employer went out shopping and left me at home with the husband but if I could I would ask if I could go with her. I said I needed to buy something.*

Both Ta Ta and Marcie stated that ignoring the unwanted behaviour was their deliberate choice and felt it was satisfactory because it did not require confrontation and embarrassment. However, Marcie does not clearly indicate whether there was any long-term change in the employer's behaviour, as she had to constantly avoid being alone with him.

vi.. Escaping. When there appears to be no way to improve their work situation and nearly all avenues have been exhausted the only option for the ODW is to escape. Escape the optimum word as it is defined: "Gain liberty by fleeing, get free from detention, control, oppression, etc." (Oxford English Dictionary). Escaping is fraught with dangers as some ODWs have their passports taken away from them and in many of the receiving countries travelling without proper documentation is punishable by a prison sentence and eventual deportation. For many ODWs leaving the employers' home by walking out the front door is not an option as Tessy explains: "…the employers locked the gate in the daytime, because they are afraid I will run away. But when I had time I ran away."

It is also the advice given to the ODWs by officials when the ODWs contacted the Philippine Embassy in the receiving countries for help, as Tessy explained, "The Embassy worker told me to run away. I took their advice and I planned."

Teri was overworked and not paid for her work. She was also verbally and physically abused. Her employer and the employer's brother regularly threatened to kill her. The employer was a powerful leader of a drug syndicate so Teri took the death threats very seriously and lived in constant fear for her life. Yet, despite this dangerous situation she secretly made a complaint to her agency. However she explains that it was futile: "My employer always gave them money not to do anything about it". Finally Teri felt her only way to survive was to escape. She escaped with another ODW who worked in the house. She explains"

> *[When we ran away] we took a taxi. We had some money from our New Year's gift. We went to the Embassy but they didn't help. The whole day we stayed at the Centre. We got food and things. There were lots of Filipinos. Maybe 60 [and] everyday there were new run- aways. I was scared. The agency asked me to go back but I was afraid they would kill me. I could not take any [of my belongings with me]. The Philippines Embassy asked my employer for one-month salary and for my passport. After two weeks the Embassy provided me with a passport. [Maybe] my employer is scared if she didn't do this because she does not want a record [for maltreating maids] so she provided the passport and one month's salary.*

Marcie reports the method of escape she is familiar with:

> *There were maids I know who ran away from their employers. One left after working only 2 days. She climbed the roof and jumped over the fence and took a*

> *taxi. Another [had] told the employer she was going to the garbage but she ran away.*

Cher recounts her escape in a very frank direct manner: "I ran away. I escaped. I left at 3:00 p.m. I was not able to get to the Embassy. I was only walking. The police stopped me and took me to jail. I had no passport - that was the reason."

Mia's circumstances were different than the other ODWs because she did not end up working as a domestic worker at all, but was forced into prostitution by traffickers. Because she and the other girls refused to accept their work as prostitutes they were beaten and threatened over their two weeks in captivity. She knew her only way out was to escape. She tells of her escape:

> *We were put in one big room... We destroyed the lock and escaped after two weeks. We had no money and we did not have our luggage, but we had our passports.... It was daytime when we escaped and we walked all day.*

Mia and the other teenagers came to a fruit stand where they were given food and shelter but no salary in exchange for their labour for two and a half months. She continues:

> *[The employer of the fruit stand] said we must go to the embassy to renew our visas. So we went and on the way we had to go through a check-stop. The police saw we were illegal because we overstayed our visas and immediately handcuffed us.*

Mia and the other girls were given a jail sentence of two months, but Mia ended up in prison for a year and a half.

Escaping from their employment or their enslavement was the final act of resistance for these ODWs. They understood that if they stayed on the job, their lives would unlikely improve and would very likely get worse. For Teri to stay may have meant death.

**(b). Active non-violence:**

i. Complaining to the hiring agency.

As mentioned above, Teri who was working under dreadful conditions and had her life threatened took the risk of worsening her situation by covertly making a complaint to her agency. Although her complaint was made secretly, it was revealed she had made the complaint when the agency came to investigate. Her act of resistance had a potential for improving her situation, but her "powerful" and influential employer was able to bribe his way out of further inquiry.

Tonnette's first job in Kuwait was very burdensome: "... the children were difficult. They always hit and pinched me. Maltreatment everyday. The sir was no good either. He was always shouting." She complained to the agency and asked them for help. "They said, 'Go [from employers' home]!'" So she took their advice but she adds, "For those two months of working I got no salary." At her third job, she states: "I could not complain to the agency because they were no help to you and they only cared about taking money."

ii. Reporting the employer to the authorities. This is often done secretly.

Tessy chose to report to the authorities after her direct confrontation with the employer failed. She explains how she guilefully reported the employer's rule breaking to the Embassy officials:

> *I called the Embassy on the telephone. To get this chance I [had] told the employer I was going shopping for something at Dolmart [a shopping centre], but I called the Embassy to report my problems. I complained because I had to work at the sister-in-law's house and the mother's house and the employers' house.*

The Embassy advised her to escape, which she did.

iii. Talking back to the employer when unjustly slandered, accused, or abused;

Although, ODWs are often reluctant to directly confront their employers when a problem arises some chose to meet the problems they had with their employers head on and often after being pushed to a point of anger they shouted out their complaints. They call it "talking back" and it occurred when the employer was speaking rudely or angrily to the ODW, falsely accusing the ODW of something or making unreasonable demands. In Marcie's case the result of such action was a shift in power relations:

> *They caught me one time talking on the phone. It was 9:00 a.m. I answered the telephone and I did not know that my employer was behind me listening to me. I was scared of her. When I looked at her I saw her face had turned yellow. The employer asked who was that? What is her name? How did she know this telephone number? It was a boy on the phone but I told her it was a girl. The man on the phone said he saw me many times and wanted to be my friend but I did not know him. I lied and said it was a woman that I did not know, like that, but the story did not stop there. For three days I was interrogated, like an investigation. I [finally] talked back to her, "If you do not trust me send me to the Philippines. I do not want to stay where no one trusts me". Then later she said, "Sorry. Of all the kadamahs [maids] I have had you have a special place in my heart." She embraced me. Then I knew I could down her [puts thumb down]. I knew I had the upper hand.*

There is a persistent stereotype of Filipino women that they are meek and mild mannered and will take all sorts of abuse in silence. These attributes are obviously very attractive to potential employers as they are often played up in international advertisements of Filipino domestic workers. Yet some ODWs explained how when made very angry by unjust and unfair remarks they could not keep their tongues in check thereby nullifying the stereotype. Both Bella and Tessy explain how they yelled back in rage at their employer and how this outburst did result in change in their circumstances. Both women knew that there was a risk of losing their jobs and for Bella in her anger she decided she was willing to take that risk and felt freer to voice out all her concerns.

> *There was a time I wanted to break the contract before because there was not enough food for my daily subsistence and the employer was angry at me because my sister-in-law called me up [on the employer's telephone]. So we quarrelled. She shouted at me. I shouted at her also. I challenged her to terminate me. My employer did not want to dismiss me. Maybe she was afraid. She was comparing me to other Filipinas that she employed who could not speak English well. But I expressed myself in English and I shouted at her in English. There were really so many bad words, but I really voiced out my feelings. ...But after that everything still remained the same. No food... but maybe she felt challenged by what I said and understood why I was angry because after my contract she wanted to renew my contract for another two years!*

Tessy explains that in a fit of anger for being called a rude name she spoke back to her employer. Even as she was speaking out she was thinking of the risk she was taking and worried she had enraged her employer enough to dismiss her.

> *You know my employer said I was stupid and I told her, "I am not stupid, because even though we Filipinos are poor we are not stupid." And she said, "Yeah, you are so clever!" I said, "Yes, of course I am!" I think [to myself] 'Oh, if it backfires, maybe she is mad already!' But she stopped calling me stupid. Yeah! Because I told her [that] I work hard.*

For Tessy, talking back to her employer resulted in her employer ceasing to call her names, but nothing else changed. The employer still made unreasonable demands and withheld Tessy's salary for as long as possible each month. However, Tessy felt she had done the right thing by opposing the employer and later when conditions got to be too much for her to endure, she reported the employer to the Embassy and on Embassy workers' advice escaped from this employer.

Roe also talked back to the employer but explains how this only infuriated the employer, exacerbated the poor relationship between them, made Roe more apprehensive.

> *I only had a boyfriend there [in Hong Kong] but my employer said I could not use the telephone. I asked, "Why? He is Filipino, he is my boyfriend, why can't I call him?" She got mad I answered her back. We argued and I cried but I still could not use the telephone. We never got close and she was never nice to me. I was more sad and angry after that.*

iv. Speaking out – the ODW voices her concerns directly to the employer in a calm rational manner.

Tessy knew her rights and armed with a newspaper clipping clearly explaining the rules that ODWs must only work in one household she told her first employer that she should not have to clean three houses:

> *I complained that I did not want to do the extra two houses but they did not listen. You cannot do anything because they will tell you that is your job. [They say] "I am*

> *your employer. You must listen to me. You cannot fight. You cannot fight or do what you want."*

Although her speaking out about the breaking of rules on the employer's part did not result in change she was not dissuaded from speaking out again at her second job when the employer did not comply with the rules:

> *...in my contract they told me I had one day off a week but they did not follow that one. They did not give me one day off a week. They never let me go out. And my second employer didn't give the salary on time. Only after I asked they would give it to me. I told them I needed my salary to send home but they never gave it to me on time. For example at the end of the month they should have given me my salary already but they didn't. I still had to ask. They [eventually] gave it to me but my employers still had to talk, talk, talk before they gave it. You know the Chinese one? Always talking but not doing [what they should].*

The employer still never offered Tessy's salary on time, but Tessy knew she would be waiting a very long time for the salary if she never asked the employer directly for it.

Val offered an example of speaking out which occurred when her employer began to make sexual advances toward her. The result was that the employer demonstrated his respect for her, but she was vague on whether there was any long-term change in his behaviour.

> *So, it happened that my employer was a little bit courting me, like that. He told me he liked me. But I told him, "Sir, I respect you. I just respect you" and then.... He said he respected me.... And he is a human being. We are all human beings. I understand him. He was always quarrelling with his wife because she is not there that much and a man needs a woman. So I just told him "Stop that [flirting and attempting sexual contact] sir." He was asking if I had a boyfriend and about my personal [affairs] but I told him I had no boyfriend and I respected myself and [I said] "the only thing I can share with you, sir is that I pray to my God".*

When asked if the advances stopped Val did not answer.

Ta Ta reports that after speaking out and complaining to her employer about the unwelcome behaviours of another employee in the household she was further emboldened in her confidence as well as proud that she had in this one act proven that Filipino women have self respect. "Another time, the Egyptian gardener said he would give me money, 150 KD if we had sex. I said, 'Why would I want your money?' Maybe he thinks Filipinas will do this. I told the employer what happened and the Egyptian was fired! He must learn not all Filipinas do that!"

v. Quitting (legally terminating the contract). Of all the participants only Tonnette and Val quit their jobs before finishing their contracts.

Tonnette had 4 different employers while in Kuwait. She quit only one of these jobs. She had been working for an elderly woman and Tonnette said she quit mainly because she does not like old women.

In her first job in Taiwan Val made the decision to quit her job because her employers was "not capable of giving me my salary…and it is too difficult to communicate. She blamed me for stealing sometimes". She explains:

> *When she said I stole her clothes I just told her, 'I pray to God, whenever [there is a situation] like this and I believe it is better I go home.' On December 31, 1997 I quit. For one night I prayed to God. Is it the right decision? God spoke to me so that was my decision to go home. In the very last hours of December 31, I went home. I arrived in Manila at eleven o'clock p.m. on New Year's Eve so I am very happy. They paid for my airfare and salary.*

**(c). Collective Resistance/ NGO Activities**

i. Public protests/rallies

In Hong Kong, it is legal to make peaceful public protests and when there is a case involving ODWs, there is quick mobilisation by non-government organisations. These public protests may take the form of rallies, marches, combined with letter writing campaigns, workshops and meetings with officials. One participants explains her involvement in a rally whilst she was employed as an ODW:

> *… we had some demonstrations after an OCW was killed. They told us she committed suicide, but we did not believe it because there were signs of struggle. So*

> *we had the rally. The demonstration was organised by the woman's [ODW] relatives. ...We did not know about this rally before[hand], but we saw the banners and placards so we joined. We were really peaceful.*

In Hong Kong there are more Filipino organisations than those of the rest of the Hong Kong's expatriate community put together (Alcid, 1992). UNIFIL (United Filipinos in Hong Kong), an alliance of several Filipino Migrant organisations, has been at the forefront of mass actions and lobby work for the promotion and protection of rights and welfare of ODWs around the world and particularly in Hong Kong. Connie Bragas-Regalado, Director of UNIFIL explains some of its activities and the ways in which these activities have resulted in change in policies, nationally and internationally.

> We campaigned for women's issues. We [conducted] women oriented seminars – women's rights as domestic helpers, as Filipinos, as OCWs and as migrants. We had one big organised outdoor activity in the park. We have public forums because the OCWs must understand the issues first to get more interested. We expanded with more organisations joining us. We did petition signing, discussion groups, conferences, write-ups in the newspapers, letters to the editor. We invited the press to interview us even on national issues affecting the Philippines – like El Niño, local issues in Hong Kong, such as the hope to abolish the new conditions of stay in HK [which states] once you are terminated we have 14 days only [to find another job]. We rallied since 1987 - we filed at the Council of London but the Council said it was out of their jurisdiction. We rallied around the Executive Order 857 "Forced Remittance" during the Marcos regime. We are still campaigning for the abolition of the conditions of stay.

To this Alcid (1992: 176) adds not only did UNIFIL project the issue of "the two-week rule" and its adverse effect in the colony as well as in other parts of the world "it gave its support to the four domestics who dared contest the ruling." Ms. Bragas-Regalado also makes it clear that her organisation takes on other important issues beyond ODW issues and works in solidarity with other nationalities.

> We are very politically active. When the IMF was here local people were afraid of protesting but Filipinos raised their shouts and lead the shouts of slogans. There is no minimum wage here – only for Foreign Domestic Helpers. We said, 'You need a union to help meet your needs'. So local issues we support them too.
>
> We show solidarity with other nationalities. The Indonesians have goons... We show support to Koreans and Indonesians but we strategize by sending each group to the other's embassy [to protest].

UNIFIL also made public the dreadful conditions of the OWWA (Philippine government) shelter for ODWs:

> We took photos of the food: Two chicken feet, bean curd with rice – small quantities of soup, which is water with MSG! They said they spent up to HK$500 a day for everything for all the people being housed for groceries, cleaning supplies, meat, etc. We embarrassed de Venencia [Vice President?] and the women cried – the wives, etc. when we confronted them publicly with a microphone.

In response to the many problems of the OWWA shelter for ODWs, UNIFIL established its own shelter.

The organisation has met with negativity by various factions as Connie explains in the following three examples, but this has not stopped their activities and has only proven its ability to effect change:

> There is "Black Propaganda" against UNIFIL. They say we are communists. So many OCWs [but not us] praise the Consulate. When there is a function the consulate invites the "good" OCWs to praise -only to clap, not to speak. It's really sad. But only when an OCW comes and says, " UNIFIL sent me" does the government act.
>
> The Jesus is Lord people support [President] Ramos. They say "We love Jesus, we love Ramos!" They always come out in big numbers cheering Ramos on his visits to Hong Kong. We, APMMF, Mission, UNIFIL stand on the other side waving flags and banners protesting Ramos' policies on OCWs.

The APMMF newsletter (March-June, 1997: 9-10) confirms Connie's description of what occurs. For example in May, 1997, UNIFIL came to protest both at Ramos' keynote address at an investors' forum in Hong Kong and at a meeting with Ramos at the Philippine Consulate. The group declared that Ramos "has invited foreign investors to partake of this golden opportunity to engage in business, to the detriment of peasants who were forcibly evicted from their land to make way for factories and industrial estates" rendering Filipinos jobless and landless. UNIFIL further proclaimed that "a foreign investors infested economy can only mean lower wages, job insecurity, anti-workers legislation and practices and oppression." Perhaps not surprisingly UNIFIL and its member organisations were not invited as audience members to a meeting with Ramos at the Philippine Consulate while the Jesus is Lord Filipino migrant organisation was not only invited but provided miniature Philippine flags and snacks. UNIFIL and its member organisations were provided a cordoned off area which was out of sight and earshot of Ramos.

Connie goes on to state:

> The Consulate is the Philippines' jurisdiction but why do they bring in Chinese police to kick us out? The police here are very careful about human rights. They will never hurt me. One time the consulate called the police to stop us [protesting]. We asked, "Who sent you?" They said the consulate, but the consulate denied it. So the police said, "OK. Go on with your rally then". We know the faces of the police because they are the same police at our open rallies every time. We are unarmed. Why are they afraid of us? We are only armed with placards.

Alcid (1992) reiterates that Philippine Consulate officials have been suspicious of UNIFIL's avocation for structural changes in the Philippines (e.g. implementation of genuine agrarian reform, removal of US military bases, and peace based on justice). However, Alcid (1992: 176) contends UNIFIL's actions lie in its analytical framework. "UNIFIL recognizes the interconnection between their own overseas employment and the macro-socio-economic problems of the Philippines; thus it cannot and should not be limited to migrants' issues and concerns."

### Analysis

#### Power

ODWs are often perceived as silent, passive, helpless, hopeless, and powerless due to a narrow concept of what constitutes politics as Ackelsberg (1988:309) explains:

> Unless we begin to change our conceptual framework to incorporate a broader conception of politics, and of who can and does participate in it, much of the radical potential of actions that are already taking place will be lost – even to those who participate in them. Ideologies do not control behaviour, but they do set the categories within which we understand it.

To categorise ODWs as powerless immediately narrows our vision of the radical potential of actions that ODWs exercise– blinds us to their acts of resistance, for where there is power being exercised there is resistance, even in the ODW work/living circumstances. Foucault (1980: 142) suggests,

> There are no relations of power without resistances; the latter are all the more real and effective because they are formed right at the point where relations of power are exercised; resistance to power does not have to come from elsewhere to be real, nor is it inexorably frustrated through being the compatriot of power. It exists all the more by being in the same place as power.

The ODW workplace is fraught with power exercised in the relationships between ODWs and members of the employers' household, between ODWs and the state (the Philippine government and the host countries' governments), and it is fraught with resistance exercised in actions, formed at the point of reproduction. Ackelsberg's (1988) warning that "the radical potential of actions that are already taking place will be lost" alerts us to the need of broadening the concept of resistance beyond heroics so to understand how ODWs negotiate, struggle, and create meaning on their own. To this end Gramsci's (1971) notion of resistance is particularly meaningful. Gramsci asserts that the tiny, seemingly trivial acts through which subordinate individuals or groups undermine – rather than overthrow- oppressive relations of power are important forms of resistance. The recognition of acts of "everyday resistance" forces us to reconsider the stereotype of the powerless ODW and possibility for transformation.

Even in the most unlikely places to find resistance occurring, i.e. within an extreme domain of dominance such as in slavery, it does occur. People have demonstrated the will to resist oppression by employing all manner of tactics and coping mechanisms to undermine authority and also help them to survive daily doses of overwork, degradation, humiliation, beatings, torture, sexual abuse, psychological abuse, and the constant frustration at the apparent futility of changing the system. Hiro (1991) provides an example in this description of coping strategies devised by Black slaves in North America during early colonial days:

> They lied: they played dumb; they deliberately, yet definitely, slowed their movements and thus reduced their work output. They perfected circumlocution as a fine art… They developed repression of their feelings and "playing it cool" as

> defence mechanisms against the system… The slave also learned to release his frustration and misery into humour and laughter – often at himself, sometimes at his fellow slaves. For him laughter became a safety valve (Hiro, 1991: 22).

Lewis (1983:175) also talks about the "covert protest" of slaves, which included:

> …everything from feigned ignorance, malingering, sabotage, slowed-down work habits, suicide, and poisoning of masters, on the endless invention of attitudes that reflected a general war of psychological tensions and stresses between both sides in the master-servant relationship.

Slaves and other oppressed peoples like ODWs are described as powerless because they lack the power that their employers possess. Yet, to look at power in this way – as something that can be objectified means being blind to the multifaceted ways power can be exercised, even by those labelled "powerless". It is helpful at this point to explore the notion of power, which Foucault sheds light on. For Foucault power does not constitute some kind of abstract property to be isolated and studied in itself. Power exists only in relationships and when expressed in actions. To understand power relationships, such as that in the master-servant relationship or the ODW-employer relationship the technique, forms, practices, and procedures in which power is expressed and rendered effective need to be examined. Effects of domination, i.e. of master over servant or employer over the ODW should be attributed to "dispositions, manoeuvres, tactics, techniques, functionings" (Foucault, 1979: 26).

Foucault goes on to say that to be concerned only with who has power over others trivialises the phenomenon. Indeed, power is not something that is possessed but something that is exercised.

> [Power] is not the 'privilege', acquired or preserved, of the dominant class, but the overall effect of its strategy positions – an effect that is manifested and sometimes extended by the position of those who are dominated. Furthermore, this power is not exercised simply as an obligation or a prohibition on those who 'do not have it'; it invests them, is transmitted by them and through them; it exerts pressure upon them, just as they themselves, in their struggle against it, resist the grip it has on them. (Foucault, 1979: 26-27).

He suggests power does not allow itself to be localised and fixed. So to understand the multifaceted character of power expressed in the relationship between ODWs and their employers it is helpful to consider power as ambiguous and uncentralised.

Foucault does not define power nor a clear theory of it because "Power does not exist but the practices in and through which power exists, these are potentially everywhere" (Beronius, 1986: 32). Thus, power is everywhere and so then is resistance and they are expressed in all sizes – from large nation states and corporations to individual workers.

**Resistance**

Resistance has been a much touted term springing up in many fields of studies. Briefly I turn to some of these which provide useful insights.

Willis (1981) in his study of working-class boys in schools *Learning to Labour*, provided a concept of resistance, which emphasises that individuals are not simply acted upon by abstract structures but negotiate, struggle and create meaning of their own. This concept has since been used as a starting point by numerous other researchers, especially in studies of schooling, (i.e. critical education theory, cultural studies), although with further elaboration by taking into account gender differences (c.f. Connell, 1982; Davies, 1983; Kessler *et al*, 1985; Gaskell, 1985). These authors recognise the need to be cautious of how the term resistance is applied because on the one hand, virtually any act of opposition to authority can be labelled resistance without considering the quality of that resistance or the implications of these actions. And on the other hand the political content of actions in opposition to authority cannot be ignored (Weiler, 1988).

Lamphere and Zavella (1997) write about resistance in the workplace. They build on Benson's (1986: 228) notion of resistance in work culture. Work culture, "the ideology and practice with which workers stake out a relatively autonomous sphere of action" is "generated partly in response to specific work conditions". It includes "both adaptation and resistance to these structural constraints".

Clearly, due to their position as ODWs in affluent homes, in sexist and sometimes undemocratic societies and as visible minorities, the women are limited in the actions they can take to resist oppression. Having arrived in a sexist society of the host country the women's behaviours are controlled in a way that is 'befitting to their gender'. There are certain expectations of their roles that the women will adhere. For example, it is expected that they will naturally be capable of/ be good at carrying out household duties and child-care, and that they will be compliant, non-argumentative, and respectful of authority. Having come from a sexist society, ODWs self-regulate their behaviours to what they feel is appropriate to their gender and in effect they reinforce the host society's definition of who they are and how to behave. When ODWs (attempt to) fit into the feminine stereotype of "the good domestic worker", they are reinforcing the stereotype. Hence, gender as constructed socially by the host and home country (and internally as part of the Filipino woman's identity/culture/social pressures) influences the ways ODWs resist oppression.

Furthermore, Filipino overseas domestic workers employed in Asian countries, have no alternative to living in and no option of becoming permanent residents in the country of employment. The live-in requirement has a huge bearing on the domestic worker's propensity to resist oppression and the course of action she may take to resist. As a live-in domestic worker, many women experience isolation, exploitation (as they are at all times accessible to the needs of the employers), loss of autonomy, loss of privacy, serious inconveniences (such as lack of choices in foods to eat or sufficient food), abuse, sexual assault and rape. In addition, the ODWs in the Middle Eastern countries experienced even more isolation in their jobs mainly because freedom of assembly and association is denied, and in some Middle Eastern countries there are no Christian churches. Isolation from other domestic workers, fellow Filipinos and non-government organisations, churches, and other community groups means they have limited options of where and to whom they may go to for help. The ODW's precarious residency status (as "guest worker"), the receiving countries' negligence in protecting ODWs' basic human rights, as well as the Philippine government's apparent lack of support for and assistance to ODWs result not only in serious hardships for ODWs, but puts the ODWs in a vulnerable position. Through practices and policies where power exists employers are put in powerful positions whilst ODWs are put in less powerful positions. This oppositional power is sanctioned by the states of both the receiving and sending countries.

In Dill's (1988) research, participants – Black female domestic workers in New York and Philadelphia tell their stories of resistance, which included: cajoling, chicanery, and confrontation to establish their own limits within a particular household. Dill asserts that the participants in her study did not see their options as being limited to the employers' definition of the situation: The worker redefined the employers' notion of the relationship. To "make the job good yourself" meant managing the employer-employee relationship so domestic workers could maintain their self-respect – insisting on the employers' acknowledgement of their humanity. They fought against the employers' efforts to "demean, control, or objectify them" using strategies such as chicanery, cajoling and negotiation (Dill, 1988: 51). They would make it clear what they would or would not give in way of time, commitment and personal involvement. These methods allowed them to gain dignity to the mistress-servant relationship and autonomy and control over their tasks. If the strategies failed the workers would quit. Dill makes an important point when she speaks of the value of support systems in the domestic workers' ability to resist:

> [The] sense of self-worth and the fighting spirit that many of them [domestic workers] conveyed were nurtured and supported by family members, friends and other household workers who shared the same boarding house, were members of the same clubs, or who rode the same public transportation. The Black community also supported them by valuing quality of character over position in the economic order. The organisations in the Black community such as the church provided a place in which domestic workers could achieve status based on their participation, making their occupational performance relatively unimportant. (Dill, 1988: 50)

Although Dill's participants are not 'living in' (which means they have more space and opportunity to resist and gain support from their ethnic community), the value of community organisations like the church in nurturing a sense of self-worth is reflected in the narratives of Bella, Roe, and Val above. However it should also be pointed out that the values of humility, patience, and forgiveness are emphasised in Christianity (the religion of all the participants except Mia who "has no religion") and interpreted by some of the participants to mean that enduring some of the employers' abuse is a necessary part of being a good Christian, of "knowing Jesus" (Val). For example, Roe declares, "I complained to a friend [about my employer's abuse]. She said, 'Just be patient. Don't answer back'. … I sacrificed a lot. It was my cross to bear." Roe's statement also highlights the fact that her 'community members' might not be supportive of acts of resistance and perhaps encourage passivity as a response to abuse.

Cohen (1991) describes the domestic workers' resistance as "levelling off" the "unbalanced exchange situation". Reducing production in the working situation is one such method of levelling off. Examples include: intentionally damaging the vacuum cleaner to avoid having to move all the furniture to vacuum twice a week; deliberately doing a poor job on whitening the laundry so to avoid being asked to do it again; using caring for the baby as an excuse not to do unpleasant household tasks. Other ways for the domestic worker to restore a more balanced exchange is through petty stealing from the employer, and hinting at and receiving gifts. In addition, domestic workers may cognitively alter the perception of the exchange balance to help them cope with an exploitative situation. For example, the under-rewarded worker may cognitively lower the outcome of her over-rewarded employer by perceiving her as unhappy, unproductive, lonely and bored (210) and perceive herself as being a system-beater and a moral winner. Cohen (1991) describes a cognitive alteration in which a domestic worker increases self-esteem and enhances pride and dignity through a little deception – a "backstage act" to sustain a "front-stage performance". For example an employer complained about the coffee being spilled in the saucer and asked the domestic worker to get her another cup and saucer. The domestic went to the kitchen and simply poured the spilled coffee back into the cup and served it again. Participants Ta Ta, Bella, Val, Tessy, Tonnette, Delia, Dawn, Teri and Marcie allude to using some of the "cognitive alteration" resistance techniques above.

Participants' descriptions of non-violent acts of resistant above are similar to actions taken by participants in an earlier study I conducted on Filipino live-in caregivers in Edmonton, Canada (Brigham 1995). Participants in that study stated unequivocally that Filipinos avoid confrontation as a general rule, as 'Nancy' explained:

> For Filipinos, our general nature, if we are being abused we just keep quiet, but when the time comes that we can do something, then we just say, 'I am very sorry I cannot work with you anymore' and then we just leave and look for another job (Brigham 1995: 94).

The participants give many examples of enduring the maltreatment they received from their employers until their contracts expired or until such time as they felt able to quit. For the live-in caregiver, quitting was like admitting defeat. Quitting is also the very last resort for three reasons:

1) Fear the immigration officials would view her negatively and possibly jeopardise her chance for permanent resident status - 'Beth' explains:

> …I wanted to finish my year because you have to do two years of nanny before you can apply for open visa. And if you make too many, ah if you break contract they might think there is something wrong with you. The immigration officers don't know how it really is and all they see is, 'Oh, she has broken her contract', you know? (Brigham, 1995: 51-52);

2) The caregiver is required to pay a fee each time she changes employers and given her low income and her sense of obligation to remit her salary to family in the Philippines this fee may deter her from changing jobs;

3) When the employee becomes unemployed for whatever reason she must find another job in a very short time or she can be deported (Brigham, 1995: 52).

Hence, short of quitting, the live-in caregivers will choose subtle means of resistance to transform behaviours during the daily challenges faced on the job.

The situation for participants in this doctoral study (who are employed in Asian countries) differs from the Canadian context but participants (with the exception of Tonnette) express similar concerns as the three listed in the above paragraph. Some participants stated their worry about getting a reputation for being a "problem ODW" if they leave their jobs before their two-year contract is complete. For example, Bella makes it clear that although she was unhappy at her job and getting thinner by the day because of a lack of food she 'stuck it out' because she did not want a reputation as being a quitter and possibly ruining her future chances of ODW employment. Also, as Tonnette, Cher, and Teri learned to quit or escape is to risk losing salary for the period worked (and in Teri's case personal belongings as well). Also the third point made above that ODWs can be deported from the host country if they are unemployed for a period of time is a fact that all ODWs must contend with, although the time in between jobs may vary from country to country. For example, in Hong Kong the "Two Week Rule" allows ODWs to stay in Hong Kong for up to two weeks to look for other employment after the ODWs terminate their contract (SENTRO, 1997; FMW-HK, 1990).

Although quitting and direct confrontation were rarely practised as forms of resistance Brigham (1995) reports that indirect subtle attempts at changing the situation were utilised. These subtle attempts included passing hints, making polite suggestions, and modelling behaviours they wanted their employer to emulate. Direct confrontation with employers was resorted to only after indirect efforts failed. 'Beth' gives this example: "[The employer] would start vacuuming the floor above my room, I slept in the basement, at 2:00 in the morning. I could not sleep. I had to work from 9:00 a.m. to 9:30 p.m. and I could not work well when I was awake until 2:00 a.m." Beth tried various subtle non-confrontational strategies such as making sure the room was spotless before going to bed, hinting at the employer that the floor did not require cleaning, and then indirectly suggesting that the floor not be vacuumed before taking a direct approach, which was successful. "I finally had to tell her that I could not work well without my sleep and she stopped doing that" (Brigham, 1995: 54).

Another subtle strategy the participants resorted to was "bowing, nodding, smiling and trying to ignore domestic arguments… to demonstrate what they believed their employers wanted, basically humility and obedience" (Brigham, 1995: 87). In doing so, they took charge of the situation by playing up the behaviours they believed the employers wanted in order to keep their jobs and keep the employer happy while at the same time not internally accepting their employers perception of them as lowly servants. However, the participants acknowledged that by behaving this way the wide social gap between employer and employee would not be challenged.

Rightly so, Groves and Chang (1999: 237) ask, "How can one distinguish between deference as strategic resistance and deference as forced compliance?" Although it may prove difficult to distinguish between the two, Tucker (1988), Rollins (1990) and Dill (1988) explain that the element of psychological protection by the domestic worker is key to making this distinction. Psychological protection occurs when domestic workers refuse to internally accept the employers' perception of them and refuse to accept the employers' belief system.

Tucker (1988) in her research of African American domestic workers in the segregated southern United States, similarly reports that domestic workers dealt with feelings of powerlessness by "manipulating the situations in which they were perceived as childlike, lazy, or inferior" (106). Domestics used their "knowledge of whites [to]...help them to fool whites- to play the part expected of them" (197).

In her research of African American household workers in Boston, Rollins (1990) notes that domestic workers were expected to play the role of "Uncle Tom – the grinning maid" (80), appear needy and grateful, have low intelligence -"close to retarded" (83), and be unattractive and unglamorous. Even a weak character would be tolerated as all of these characteristics would reinforce and reproduce the inferiority of the domestic worker on class, racial, and gender basis. The domestic worker would therefore personate these expectations. Rollins (1985: 231-232) maintains that domestics "pretend to be unintelligent, subservient, and content with their positions" because they know that their position could be lost, but they protect themselves psychologically by refusing to accept the employer's belief system. Rollins elaborates on the elements, which contribute to the workers' ability to protect themselves such as:

> [The domestic workers'] intimate knowledge of the realities of employer's lives, their understanding of the meaning of class and race in this country [USA], and their value system, which measures an individual's worth less by material success than by "the kind of person you are", by the quality of one's interpersonal relationships and by one's standing in the community. (Rollins, 1985:212-213)

A study of domestic workers in South Africa (Cock 1980) determines that domestics have "rituals of rebellion" which help them to keep their personality and integrity intact. The main mode of adaptation to the position of powerlessness is to adopt "a mask of deference as a protective disguise" (103). They may also mock their employers and use silence as rituals of rebellion.

Although Cock (1980), Dill (1988), Rollins (1985, 1990), and Tucker (1988) make the case for distinguishing between what is deemed resistance and what is compliance in the example of deference as a method of resistance, a clear distinction is not always readily evident. This may well be because some acts of resistance simultaneously include both resistance and compliance. Kondo (1990) in her study of power, gender and discourses of identity in a Japanese workplace makes this assertion. She states that strategies may invoke subversion and the attempt to control the production process but concurrently bind workers more firmly to management's control mechanisms and to compliance with the firm's policies. Lamphere and Zavella (1997) reaffirm that finding in their study of women working at an apparel plant. They state:

> Individuals develop their own sets of tactics and strategies for gaining a measure of control over their work. Although these tactics can be seen as a measure of resistance …they also ensnare women in the system itself, keeping them working to improve their percentages. (83)

Most of the studies described above illustrate the ways in which women have resisted power as expressed in the mistress-servant relationship in the live-in domestic work arrangement and in the labour processes through individual strategies. Collective tactics are not unheard of (cf. Lamphere and Zavella, 1997) but expressly in the domestic work occupation – in the private domain of the home, they are more difficult to organise. This is true of the ODWs in host countries where organising is illegal. However, in a country like Hong Kong there is ample evidence (cited above) that ODWs' organising/collective resistance has been very successful in bringing about change. But how effective are the individual acts of resistance to making change? Perhaps compared to the collective acts of resistance it is not as clear, but for the individual ODW her actions bring about transformation as expressed in her reasons for why she resists. For the women committing acts of resistance is to assert their humanity; to push the boundaries (of stereotypes, which confine/define them) with the goal to make temporary change for themselves or to make permanent change for themselves and others; and to meet their needs (i.e. rest, food, freedom, privacy, "staying sane", self-esteem, recognition or salary payment, etc.).

Weiler (1988:51-2) highlights three themes revealed in feminist studies of resistance and cultural production, which are helpful in this discussion:

1. The assertion that all people have the capacity to make meaning of their lives and to resist oppression, as Giroux points out "inherent in a radical notion of resistance is an expressed hope, an element of transcendence." (1983: 108);
2. That that capacity to resist and understand is limited and influenced by class, race, and gender position;
3. That various "solutions" sought by people embedded in sexist, racist, and classist society can lead to greater/deeper forms of domination and oppression of others.

It is important to note that the experiences of the participants in my study are quite different from those discussed in the research cited above of domestic workers in the United States and Canada [i.e. by Brigham (1995), Cohen, (1997), Dill (1988), Rollins (1985, 1990), and Tucker (1988)]. The two most significant differences are the 'living in' stipulation and immigration status.

The live-in aspect of the job is the least favourable job requirement for domestic workers everywhere. In the USA and in Canada all domestics would avoid it or change their circumstances as soon as possible so that they are living out. In the USA, a shift to day time work for domestic workers since the 1920s has made the live-in requirement rare (Clark-Lewis, 1987), with the exception of West Indian women most of whom must live-in while being sponsored waiting to become legal permanent residents (Colen 1990). In Canada, domestic workers have no choice but to live in for at least two years, under what is called the live-in caregiver program (LCP) [cf. Arot-Koc (1992), Brigham (1995), Daenzer, (1993), Schecter (1998), Stasiulis and Arot-Koc, (1998)]. However, in both countries domestic workers are given the option to immigrate as permanent residents after two years in Canada and "from two to five or more years" (Colen, 1990: 97) for the West Indian domestic workers in the USA.

## Conclusion

While it is true that ODWs have not had access to the resources enabling them to wield influence within their workplaces, where the international political systems of the Philippines and the host countries have been designed and maintained everyday with some men at the top and many women at the bottom, there is a complex reality that needs to be uncovered. This complexity includes the politics of class, race, colonialism, gender, migration, development, citizenship, identity, nationalism, etc. When complex realities are examined and conceptual frameworks in which we examine them are opened up, we better understand the ways in which ODWs make meaning of their lives and resist oppression.

To ignore individual and collective actions and to portray these women as passive victims in international politics is a great injustice. For despite the risks (e.g. of being deported, being jailed, being further abused, being denied access to their belongings, being fired, being murdered, being jobless and homeless and facing future uncertainty once quitting or escaping) through passive and active non-violence as well as collective resistance these women have found strategies that humanise themselves and in some cases lead to social transformation.

The strategies of resistance provide potential for social transformation but some of the strategies lead to deeper forms of oppression for themselves and of others, such as the acts of deference. Although it has the element of "psychological protection" (Tucker, 1988; Rollins, 1990; and Dill, 1988) whereby the domestic workers refuse to internally accept the employers' perception of them it does not alter the employers' behaviours and only on the surface does the strategy appear to be effective. It can in fact lead to higher levels of repression.

Another important note to make is a paradoxical one. Under "hidden defiance" categorised as "passive non-violence" mainly the conversion of children to another religion implies an element of violence.

In accessing which strategies had the most profound social transformation the collective acts resulted in longer-term societal change. Individual acts within the confines of the employer's home, such as active non-violence improved the situation for the individual and may have a lasting change on the employer's and the employer's children's behaviours toward his/her workers. Passive non-violent acts helped improved the workers' lives at a psychological level, but rarely resulted in long-term societal change. However, I take Scott's (1985) point that everyday tactics of survival are often dismissed as ineffectual and insignificant because they are not tied to structural and emancipatory transformations. He adds, these tactics are, in fact, a "tenacity of self-preservation", the "grinding efforts to hold one's own against overwhelming odds" and they are testament to "a spirit and practice that prevents the worst and promises something better" (Scott, 1985: 350).

Lessons that can be drawn for emancipation are those of collective acts of resistance which take place in nongovernment organisations. Some of the migrant worker NGOs both in the Philippines in some of the host countries draw on theories of critical pedagogy and critical feminist pedagogy.

A truly democratic education, which critical feminist pedagogy provides has the power to transform society and prepare migrant women to organise and struggle for equal political power. Critical feminist pedagogy demands a continuous quest for social transformation requiring an understanding of societies provided by critical reason in order to challenge hegemony, which attempts to place beyond question the existing inequalities they are experiencing. In a critical feminist pedagogy, migrant domestic workers develop an understanding of how the social construction of knowledge determines what people believe is true and how their surroundings are interpreted (Giroux as cited in Spring, 1994). This understanding includes:

> ...The task of identifying the ways in which individuals construct themselves into existing structures, and are thereby themselves formed; the way in which they reconstruct social structures; the points at which change is possible, the points where our chains chafe us most, the point where accommodations have been made. (Haug, 1987: 41)

### *Reflections on actions of resistance*

Participants Bella, Tessy, Tonnette, Ta Ta, Teri, Roe, Val, Dawn, and Cher who all had some negative experiences overseas feel that if they were to go overseas again they would have more confidence in themselves and would know which action to take if they had similar bad experiences. Interestingly although many of the women stated that they received help from the Embassy they would not recommend others to go there for help. Most of these women felt that the actions they took in their last ODW jobs were the correct ones and would do these again in the same situation in future. A few women felt that they would be less hesitant and quicker to act in future situations and less tolerant of employers' abusive behaviours.

Many participants noted that if there were NGOs in the countries where they worked they would go there for help rather than government administrations, recruitment/hiring agencies, Embassies or Consulates. According to the participants, there are several reasons for their preference:

(1) The staff of these government institutions does not act quickly if they act at all.

(2) The staff often gives bad advice (such as advising physically and sexually assaulted overseas contract workers to return to their abusive employers with the suggestion to "try to be more patient and understanding with the employer"). Teri and another housemaid escaped from their employer's house and ran to the Philippine Embassy. Although the Embassy was able to get Teri's passport back from the employer along with one month's salary, her companion was encouraged to go back to the abusive employer. Teri complains:

> *What is OWWA [Overseas Workers Welfare Administration] doing? The Filipina maids are maltreated and they ask her to go back? I hate them [at OWWA] very much. The Philippine Embassy never does anything so I will*

> *never go to them. The POEA [Philippine Overseas Employment Administration] and OWWA never respond.*

(3) They are reluctant to assist ODWs in need because of lack of resources or because of the attitude by some OWWA officials that, "if you help one then you will suddenly be expected to help thousands."[4]

(4) They are reluctant to stand up for ODWs. They have tried to convince abused and raped ODWs not to press charges against employers and generally keep quiet about "the incident" for fear of harming international relations with the host country.

(5) They are corrupt and they lack respect for ODWs.

(6) They often leave the jobs, which they are being paid to do, to the NGOs, even while not co-operating with many of these NGOs.

Roe explains:

> *A friend said don't call [the Embassy] because they never listen. I know that.*

Tonnette confirms:

> *I never went to the Embassy [in Kuwait]. I am afraid that if you go, the Madam [employer] will get you [back] again. I cannot trust the Embassy...*

Congressman Romeo Candazo, who is Chair of the sub-committee of Filipino OCWs, House of Representatives also underscores some of the major problems with the Philippine Embassies. He declares:

> Our embassies are undermanned and there is a disproportionate number of embassy officers and foreign service workers and welfare officers [at different posts in different countries]. The posts in the US and Europe are very crowded. For example, in Chicago we have 40 embassy staff. That's in Chicago alone! Compare it to Kuwait which has only 13 staff in the whole country and there is greater distress of Filipinos in Kuwait. And in Singapore we have 23 staff. That's less than our people we have in New York City. So I think there should be not only a reorientation of the foreign service but deployment of people to areas where they are needed. ... So we might as well reorient our embassy people, etc. that your primary function is to protect Filipino nationals abroad. (Personal interview with Candazo, February, 1998)

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[4] Interview with Administrator, OWWA January 20, 1998

He adds further criticism of the Embassy workers themselves, which supports the arguments many participants made:

> The embassies are the ones who are in charge of the workers while they are abroad. They are not effective. Of course they are not effective! A lack of people [is part of the problem] but principally in the orientation they are conservative. They are rather snobbish. They consider the protection of Filipino workers as a rather lowly or dirty job so they leave it to the welfare officer of OWWA. We have to have a big re-orientation. It's a big job but we have to start somewhere! [Laughs]. (Personal interview with Candazo, February, 1998)

Teri tried to get help by telephoning both the embassy and the agency. She declares the agency is the last place to go for help because "They only care about money" explaining that they are easily bribed by employers not to do anything to improve the life of the ODW and because "the agency asks you to go back when you escape". She also would not go to the Embassy because they "do nothing, they don't help and there are so many Filipinos [in need of help] there already". However, Teri had to admit that the Embassy did help her to eventually get her passport and salary from her employer. She feels that if in the future she works overseas and experiences problems she would do what she had done again. Ultimately, she would find a way to escape and go to the Embassy but refuse to hear any suggestion of going back to the abusive employer. Her advice to new ODWs is "Be good. Do not shout. Be polite. Go to the Philippine Embassy if you need help. This is very important. You must get the address before you leave. Do not go to the agency for help because some are no good."

Tonnette called the agency when she needed help, was terminated or wanted to change employers. It would be the agency where she would go if she needed help when she goes overseas again. However, she declares that her advice to new ODWs is, "Just be nice to your employers and they will be nice to you." She says this despite the fact that her "niceness" did not pay off in two of her jobs.

Roe offers advice to new ODWs that suggests no action needs to be taken other than, "Just be patient. Don't complain". She claims that agencies are where one should go for help, not the Embassy. However, when asked if she ever called the agency she replied, "No because they never do anything and they are back-fighters. [I mean that] they are someone who fights you. They don't listen or believe you[r side of the story]. They blame you [the ODW]." She only called her friend who was also working in Singapore for advice which was, "Just be patient. Don't complain". She believes her next job will not require any action on her part because it will be in Hong Kong "where I have lots of friends" who will help her if needed.

Cher states that the biggest change in herself is her added confidence to "take a stand". She says she learned this after escaping her employers. She declares: "You [have] got to take a stand. I mean if you are doing good and your employer makes you wrong, you have to fight for yourself to prove that you are right." She makes this statement although she was unable to do this at her job. However, she feels that her escape was proof of a newly found confidence and her eventual return to the Philippines was her reward.

Bella felt that one of her main lessons from her ODW experience was learning that discrimination is a part of the job but need not be tolerated. Although one gets a low wage in the Philippines as a professional one still gets more respect than an ODW getting a better wage in Hong Kong. She calls this experience "taking a step down", which affects one's self esteem.

> *Earning is very hard. Employers are stepping on us. And we have to step down. They say, oh you are only a Filipino Domestic Helper. There is discrimination and we cannot accept this. We have college degrees here in the Philippines. But maybe this is my lesson – to learn from these challenges. ... [some ODWs] lose their self-esteem and they develop psychiatric problems.*

She declares that in her next ODW job she would be as patient as she was but would speak out if necessary as she did in her ODW job when she wanted changes.

Tessy feels that her experiences abroad have changed her. "Oh yes I changed a lot. I feel stronger and braver and more independent because when you are abroad you have no family for emotional support." She believes that the way she addressed her problems with both ODW jobs was the best way and if she went abroad again, she would not hesitate do the same thing again and would tolerate abuse or exploitation for a shorter time.

Dawn believes that with her confidence she would be very capable of defending her rights when overseas next time. "I have changed very much since I went abroad. Yes. Before I was shy and ashamed to speak but I learned to talk especially to my employers. I learned to express myself. I also can speak Malay very well now."

Ta Ta feels that she is "too confident" now with all her ODW experiences. Although she has been abroad illegally all three times she is planning to go again illegally through "an agency. The manager is a friend of mine. I will go abroad [as a laundry attendant at a hotel in Brunei]. I will save and I know how to manage because of my experience." When asked if she will receive any pre-departure information or a PDOS before she goes she laughed, "[Laughs]. I do not need a PDOS! I will orient my companions.... I have the background. I have the experience. I can handle any situation... I am a flexible woman in attitude." With her attitude and confidence she believes she will be capable of ensuring her rights are not denied. She claims she would go to the agency if she needed help but not the embassy – especially as she will have gone into the country without proper documentation.

Val believes that she is "becoming more bold now" adding "I cannot suppress my personality" meaning that she will speak up in all situations. She attributes this to becoming "closer to God" whilst abroad. She is certain that she has the personality to take action against any employer's abuse or wrong doings. She knew "in her heart" that her decision to quit her last ODW job was the right one because "God spoke to me". She says she will pray to God again for help in making the right decisions in the future if her employment is not satisfactory. She adds she would go to an NGO if there was one and if she had time. Her advice for new ODWs is,

> *In Saudi they should go to the Embassy. In Saudi, Ma'am the only thing is the Embassy. In Taiwan you can go to the agency but if they do not act on the problem then call an NGO, like "MAKO" [a name of an NGO she had heard about at her PDOS]. If they do not act again then go to the Embassy.*

# Chapter Seven: Post- ODW stage: The return of the *Bagong Bayani* ("New heroes")

## Introduction

Everyday 2,300 Filipino overseas workers are deployed to various places abroad and everyday hundreds of migrant workers return for good with the numbers of returnees expected to increase "as the world reels from the economic recession that many analysts predict will continue for a long time" (Payot, 2002). For the most part individual returnees garner little attention. Only in high profile cases are returnees made highly visible. Examples include the return of Sarah Balabagan and the cases of forced returns due to wars (most notably the Gulf War of 1990-91 when 46,182 OCWs were repatriated [Migrante, 2001]), armed conflict, political unrest, or economic recessions (especially during the "Asian economic crisis") in the receiving countries. The most recent example would be the return of Filipino OCWs from Oman, a country which has banned Filipinos from working there and refused to renew contracts of Filipinos already there. This is in retaliation to the arrest of several Oman citizens suspected as terrorists in the Philippines following the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks in the US (Payot, 2002). It is speculated that more Filipinos will be returned from the Middle Eastern region following President GMA's declaration of total support of the US in its military offensive against Afghanistan (People's media centre, 2001).

Like most other countries, the Philippines does not have a system to collect data on returning migrants. Although OCWs who return by air transport must fill out an arrival card there is no matching of departure and arrival cards. The POEA does keep track of "*balik-manggagawa*" or re-hires (those who have returned to the Philippines but are leaving again for another overseas job) but the number of re-hires does not reflect the number of returnees (Battistella, 1997). Battistella (1997) estimates that the annual number of returnees to be the same as the number of new hires. Therefore, in 2000, the estimate would be approximately 200,000 (DOLE, 2002).

For most returnees reintegration is not a smooth process. Reintegration of returning migrants into their home societies has not been an easy experience as Battistella (1997: 4) points out. He explains that "Migrants do not find the community they dreamed about with nostalgia when abroad, and the community looks at migrants with circumspect". The same may be said of returning to their families possibly with gaps and conflicts arising from disappointments from unmet expectations and changes in values, attitudes and identities mainly on the part of the migrant.

A further complication of returning migrants is the issue of reintegrating into the Philippine economy. Unemployment and underemployment continue to be a major economic quandary for the Philippines. With 400 workers losing their jobs a day due to retrenchment, closure and shutdowns the present economic crisis is described as the worst since World War II (BMP, KPML, 2001). In the first eleven months of 2001, 63,780 workers were permanently displaced, 42 percent (or 27,045) of whom were women (CWR, 2002).

As the main focus of this study is on the educational dimensions of the post-ODW phase, I will be drawing on the conceptual analysis and theorising from the CFP framework. The reintegration process of the ODWs is presented within three themes in the post-ODW stage at the family level, the societal/ economic level and the personal level.

### Reintegration at the family-household level

#### *"I'm home!": Reunion with family*

After the separation of the participants from their families the changes they found not only in themselves but also in their family came as a shock. On everyone's part readapting was required upon her return home as Bella explains:

> *I had to take time to adjust myself to the kids again. Two years apart is a long time. [For example,] my youngest son was 6 when I left and 8 years old [when I returned home]. It was no problem adjusting to my husband again because my husband is* [pauses] *good!* [Laughs].

For participants that left very young children the reunion was not as joyous as they had hoped. For example, Tessy explains her child's reaction to her after she returned two years later.

> *My son forgot me. When I came home [two years later] he ran away from me. His grandmother said, "That is your mother". He said, "I don't want her". I motivated him [to come to me] with chocolates. After a week he knew me better.*

Dawn was the one mother participant who had been away for the most consecutive years. Her youngest was two when she left and seven years old when she returned. This daughter and Dawn's other two children (who were three and five when Dawn left) as well as Dawn's younger siblings (some of whom are only a few years older than Dawn's children) felt unacquainted and shy of Dawn but she does not elaborate on her day of return or her feelings about having been separated from her children. When asked how she felt she simply replied that she was a big help to them with the money she sent home.

Marcie describes her feelings of sadness about being snubbed by her daughter on her day of arrival home after being away for two years:

> *I came back and all the family knew I was coming home but [my daughter] was not here when I arrived. Everyone was here but not her. I went to look for her. I went to [a neighbouring town] to look for her. Only the uncle [of my daughter's friend] was there. He told me she was shopping. I went back home and she returned only at 9 p.m. but she didn't call [me] up until 10 p.m. then she came here with her friend. She was so thin and pale. I cried. I asked, "Why is she doing like that?"*

### *Regrets upon return*

Five of the eight mother participants expressed regret about having left their children although five of them believe it was the best decision at the time. The women's regrets appear to correspond with how they felt about their ODW experience, whether they were able to send remittances home, and if they had complete confidence in their children's caregivers. Those who had difficult experiences and returned with little or no money proclaimed the deepest regret. For example Cher, who was "maltreated everyday", eventually escaped forced confinement in her employer's house, was never paid and was falsely "deported for drug trafficking" states: "I had two children at that time. I wish I did not go and leave them. It wasn't worth it."

Bella was able to send money home regularly, which was helpful in paying off a debt her husband had incurred when he bought a taxi with a large bank loan. Her experiences were more positive than most of the other women's particularly because she had freedom to come and go from her employer's house on her day off, but she was still deprived of sufficient food and had to sleep inside a TV cabinet every night - the space her employers provided her. She says this about leaving her children.

> *I regretted leaving the children for two years because my children did not have any good manners [when I returned home]. They talked to me like they were talking to any person. What they were doing to their grandmother they were doing to me. They lacked respect for their grandmother.*

Marcie says she still feels guilty about leaving her only daughter, then 16 years old, with the girl's three brothers and father at a time when her daughter needed her the most:

> *I regret leaving my daughter especially. I had trouble with her when I was away. When I was still in Jeddah [Saudi Arabia], she lived with a lesbian. She was not coming home for first one day, three days, then one week, then one month. My husband spoiled her [because he permitted this]. I was very worried about her. I asked why she is doing like that? She said "Because you are not here. I am the only girl here. Who can I turn to? Nobody!" If I was there I wouldn't let this go [on] like that. A girl needs a mother not just a father... That is my problem. My trust [of her] is 50/50. She is still staying with that girl.*
>
> SB: Did you have any problems with your three sons?
>
> *Marcie: No problems.*

Marcie and her husband believe that the disciplining of daughters is a mother's responsibility, consequently Marcie blames herself more for not being there than she blames her husband for "spoiling" her. The belief that disciplining daughters is a mother's responsibility reflects what is the typical expectation in the traditional Filipino family according to Mendez & Jocano (1974) and Porio et al (1975).

Tessy went to work in Singapore when her child was "still a baby." At her first job she was forced to clean three houses and look after two sets of children including twin babies. She eventually escaped to the Philippine embassy and was able to get another job. She declares her regrets about leaving her son:

> *I left my child when he was one year and three months old. He was still a baby yet. ... I regretted leaving him because now he is his father's pet. He loves his father more than me and that really hurts. If you are the mother you must have, you know, a special bond. ...*

Teri was maltreated, overworked, and underfed in her ODW jobs and like Tessy eventually escaped to the Philippine embassy before returning home. Her son was two years old when she left and although she trusted her child's caregiver (mainly her mother-in-law although her husband was also there) she was shocked and saddened to find out upon her return that her remittances had been used in part to support her husband's live-in mistress and she had no savings. Teri felt that in many ways her ODW experiences left her "disappointed" about being separated from her toddler by a lot of "wasted time" [hardships that didn't pay off financially].

Three participants, Tonnette, Dawn and Ta Ta did not express feelings of regret about leaving their children. Tonnette returned with only 6000 pesos (approx. US$240) after working abroad for over a year yet this money was helpful in educating her older children. She confesses she missed them but she felt her leaving was necessary and helpful and she has no regrets. In fact she is returning soon to Kuwait.

Dawn too asserts that she had no regrets about leaving her three children (who were aged five, three, and two years old) when she left for five years. She declares simply, "I was a big help to my family with the money I was sending them."

Ta Ta admits, "I am unfortunate with all my overseas experiences… financially I get nothing out of going abroad." But she adds she never felt regret or worried about her children because her mother is "a very good babysitter. She has taken care of them since they were very young and my kids love her very much" and her siblings also promised to "raise my children and give them food" when she was away. Additionally her children were aged seven to 12 when she first went overseas, which helped reduce feelings of regret "because they were in school already."

The emotions the women (mothers and non-mothers alike) experienced immediately after returning to the Philippines ranged from hopelessness, guilt, sadness, despondency, frustration, disappointment, discontentment, and uncertainty to (and perhaps in conflict with) feelings of satisfaction (after seeing how their families had benefited from their remittances) as in the case of Tonnette, Val, Delia, Bella, Marcie and Dawn and happiness about re-uniting with loved ones. Another emotion expressed by Ta Ta was exhilaration for having survived two potentially life-threatening ordeals (escaping Kuwait during the Gulf War and returning from Malaysia in a small boat on the high seas).

For the women who were mothers before they left, the feelings of guilt, sadness, and frustration were the result of having left their families, most especially their children.

Of the four single childless women (childless at the time of returning) Mia, Val, Delia and Roe, two of them (Val and Delia) upon arrival in the Philippines returned to their home villages but only for a visit (of approximately two weeks) before returning back to Manila. Mia never returned to her home village where her immediate family lives. Roe returned to her home town in Isabella province where she lived with her parents and remained unemployed "I only worked in the house" while waiting to process her papers to go overseas again. After four months she married a farmer from the same area and two months later she went back to Manila where she is staying with her aunt this week so she can attend a PDOS and then leave for Hong Kong.

Although participants Bella and Ta Ta themselves left their children to work overseas they express concern for what they believe are irreversible negative outcomes of mothers leaving their children to work as ODWs. Bella believes that daughters as well as sons need guidance from their mothers. With a mother's prolonged absence a family will "not be good" despite the mother's good intentions of financially supporting the family with remittances. She declares,

> *The mother [who goes overseas] sacrifices to save money but the children are pitiful if they do not have their mothers. Children can live without fathers but they cannot live without their mothers. Mothers must guide them. As it is with my children. I know of an example of a 14 year old who is pregnant and married*

> *already because the girl had no guidance. Her mother was in Hong Kong. Those Filipinas [ODWs] who stay 15 to 20 years in Hong Kong they do not have good families. Even though their objective is to send the children to school with their earnings, when they come back* [pauses] *though they did send the money and the kids went to school and university, they end up with drug addicted sons, and husbands who got "married" to other women and early pregnant daughters. And those mothers who stay here and work hard to send their kids to school while only earning a little, their kids turn out good. They have careers. So I would actively discourage women, especially the married ones from going overseas*

Ta Ta sites an example of her friend who is now suffering because she was absent so long from her family while working as an ODW.

> *My friend has a very tragic story. Her husband was in jail so she came back home from abroad to bail him out. My friend is depressed. Now that he is out [of jail] he does nothing and she does nothing. He is suicidal, angry and depressed. The children grew up without her so the action of the children is not good - maybe because of her long absence. When she came back the children were like strangers. They could not adjust to her. She feels she can not adjust to them or [to] her husband.*

Ta Ta explains that for the sake of the family the woman will make sacrifices but the sacrifice of going abroad for a long time may result in a "problem family" because "Filipino women must do everything for the family and for the husband. Because of tradition women are responsible for raising the children." Yet she points out that now "not like the 1970s" women must work outside the home because one income is not enough, therefore women are often having to make the decision to help their families financially by going overseas but at the same time risking their families' emotional wellbeing.

### Analysis

One of the issues raised above is the range of emotions from family separation that the participants felt, especially those who were parents when they went overseas and perhaps even more acutely when they returned. The emotional upheaval felt by the children and other family members left behind has also been alluded to through the participants' narratives and has been well documented in several studies (see for example, Dizon-Añonuevo, 1996; Paz Cruz, 1987). Parreñas (2001), drawing on Hothchild (1983) reminds us that emotions operate within a context of social structures determined by ideologies. Marcie, Ta Ta, Tessy and Bella allude to a family-household ideology, which was discussed in greater detail in chapter four. To briefly reiterate, the family-household ideology emphasises distinct roles for mothers and fathers, girls and boys within the family-household. The mother is perceived as the nurturer and this is a central determinant of the emotional needs and expectations of its members (Medina, 1991). This role is described by the participants above. For example, Tessy stated "mothers should have a special bond" with their children, while Bella claimed that "Children can live without fathers but they cannot live without their mothers", both Bella and Marcie declared that "Mothers must guide" children, and Marcie believes mothers not fathers must discipline their daughters. In their narratives the participants stressed how mothers abroad feel the pain of separation and how the emotional distance and intimacy lost are also felt by their children left behind.

In her study, Paz Cruz (1987) reports that while 82.8 percent of her 302 youth participants stated that they would advise their friends to allow their fathers to migrate abroad but only 3.6 percent would advise their friends to allow their mothers to go abroad. These participants cited reasons that reflect traditional gender norms such as "..it is the obligation of the father to provide for the family. [Fathers] want the best for their children" (p.40), "it is better fathers go because mothers can't do what fathers do. Mothers are closer to their children…" (p. 42), and "[A father] is stronger than a girl and a man is the one who is talented" (p. 40).

Parreñas (2001) argues that the patriarchal gender norms in the Filipino family fuel the emotional stress in transnational families. The pain of separation is intensified by the failure of children's gender-based expectations for mothers to nurture them and mothers' self-imposed expectations to follow cultural and ideological inscribed duties in the family-household. In fact denying a child maternal love and care and leaving a child in the care of the father or other relative is seen as a form of child abuse by the mother (Mariano, 1995).

Parreñas (2001) also points out that when it was predominantly men who migrated overseas there was little talk of "broken families" because the traditional ideological foundation of the family was seen as stable as the mothers remained in their role of nurturer within the home and the fathers were fulfilling their duty of financially supporting the family outside the home. However when more women, especially married women with children began out-migrating (particularly in the mid-1980s) "problems" of "broken homes" became a national crisis. Bella's sentiment that families with absentee mothers are to be "pitied" because they are "abnormal" is reflective of this belief. Pertierra (1992) maintains that fears of broken homes and undisciplined children are not unfounded. He claims that migrant families sometimes have difficulties when a mother migrates overseas because child-rearing is seen as a woman's function. But he asserts this is more of a problem of urban families because in the cities homes are not "fenced in" so household activity is not constrained to household-family members and because children do not have access to their parents' places of work and have more unsupervised leisure time. Whereas on a farm, for example, children are often working alongside their parents so they have less leisure time and are more supervised and rural houses are more self-contained.

Pertierra (1992) also expounds that the socialisation of children only suffers if the migrant's children are young and her family is nuclear increasing the likelihood that the remaining spouse will face difficulties. Again he claims that there is a significant difference between rural and urban dwellers. He claims, "in rural barrios where the rhythm of life is communally shared and where neighbours and kin coincide, the absence of either parent is seldom problematic" (p. 142). Pertierra adds that a husband's absence could also have a negative impact on the family especially for "adolescent boys [who] are particularly difficult to discipline and the absence of parental or authority figures may create some problems." This suggestion reflects the traditional gender roles of parents that maintain mothers are responsible for disciplining daughters while fathers are responsible for disciplining sons which was mentioned in relation to Marcie's comment above (Mendez & Jocano,1974; Porio et al, 1975).

Parreñas (2001) suggests that a reconstitution of ideological norms would lead to a different take on the emotional cost of separation and temper the pain of separation. With an ideological shift perhaps children would appreciate the efforts of their mothers to provide material care, would not expect only mothers to be primarily responsible for the care of the family, and would gain greater emotional security from the care provided by fathers and the extended kin who are their caregivers. I would add, perhaps likewise mothers would feel less pain knowing their children are not resenting them for temporarily leaving them (as Marcie's daughter did), males and females would come to understand that their roles are not exclusive, and expectations would shift so that fathers take nurturing roles and mothers can be recognised as "breadwinners".

While this shift may be beginning to occur in some societies, Ta Ta underscores the difficult position in which mothers are currently finding themselves. The reality is that more mothers, especially single mothers like herself, have to work outside the home to support their families, and although migrating may be a solution to financial problems more problems are created when mothers leave because they are risking their families' emotional wellbeing. Put another way, women are caught between feeling that their role is as nurturer in the home and as provider of material care for their children through migration but no matter which route they take women will feel guilt and regret. Ironically, although children whose fathers have refused to offer them care of any kind (emotional, material or otherwise) (such as the children of Ta Ta and Dawn whose fathers abandoned the family) they are more likely to blame their migrating mothers than their fathers for not providing emotional care. Ta Ta, like Parreñas (2001), attributes this to the normative expectations of both women and men in Philippine society. Men are more likely to leave the emotional care to female members of the family-household in the absence of their wives (as was the case for most of the participants' husbands). Whereas if mothers who were at home whilst their husbands were abroad did the same, their actions, I suspect, would be deemed as seriously offensive, more seriously offensive.

Only one married mother participant, Marcie, stated that her role in the family-household (specifically the patriarchal relationship with her husband) changed dramatically since returning. She explains that her husband's role and her own role in the family are no longer strictly designated according to traditional gender expectations. Whilst overseas hers' and her husband's roles were "reversed;" she became the "breadwinner" whilst her husband became the caregiver. Since returning from abroad Marcie realised that the roles of husbands and wives do not have to be quite so rigidly separated because with a few exceptions, their role "reversal" proved quite successful. She believed the patriarchal structure of the family-household could be challenged to some degree, which is what she did over the course of the two years she was unemployed. She feels that her relationship with her husband is "more equal now." She explains that she has taken more of a "breadwinner" role yet still maintains a nurturing role as her business is located at their home, while her husband who works outside the home with flexible hours also maintains "breadwinner" and nurturing roles. Marcie's husband was not as resistant as she thought he would be to this 'challenge'. Perhaps this is related to the fact that he became the primary caregiver of the children in Marcie's absence (of all the participants' husbands, he and Tonnette's huband were the only two husbands to do so). A role, according to Marcie, he carried out well. As Marcie does not elaborate on his perspective, one may speculate that he came to value this role and the closer relationships he developed with his children and hence did not want to give it up entirely. Since Marcie's return he has continued with his role as caregiver along with Marcie so they function more as a team within the family-household, sharing roles. However, in one aspect of the nurturing role, Marcie makes it clear that only she and not her husband can perform the responsibility of "guide and disciplinarian" to their daughter. As will be explained below in the next section, Marcie makes all the decisions pertaining to her business (including taking a loan to help build her restaurant) and she feels that in family-household affairs she has equal decision-making power as her husband. The examples of decisions both she and her husband made together are the purchase of a washing machine, the choice of educational institutions for their children, and how Marcie would spend her spare time. (In chapter 4, Marcie had stated that as a 'housewife' her ability to go to a television studio every Friday afternoon with the children was dependent upon her husband "allowing" her to go.) Perhaps Marcie and her husband's more egalitarian relationship is also partly attributable to the fact that their children are now all of college age and are therefore less dependent on their mother, which gives Marcie more freedom, for example, to choose how to spend her spare time.

The only other married participant who alludes to but does not elaborate on changes in the patriarchal relationship with her husband is Tonnette. She does not indicate that she has challenged the patriarchal family-household ideology in any direct way, but she does declare that her taking a job overseas in the first place was a challenge to the traditional roles in her family-household (albeit still within the normative role of sacrificing mother). She adds that her sense of independence from 'making her own money' and seeing how her remittances benefited her family-household, while her husband took on the role of primary caregiver in her absence has shown both her and her husband that women's and men's roles are not exclusive.

Although Parreñas (2001) suggests that a reconstitution of ideological norms would lead to a different take on the emotional cost of separation and temper the pain of separation, she gives no indication of how this would occur. However, in this regards, as later discussed in this chapter, the potential role of NGOs in facilitating a critical feminist pedagogical process needs to be explored or acknowledged. Through CFP, the migrant women can empower themselves to organise and struggle for gender equity and a wider transformation of Philippine society.

### Reintegration at the economic level

For some of the participants their temporary ODW experience actually resulted in fewer chances of securing a job in the Philippines. The participants explain what they are doing now and what their plans are for the near future.

Mia returned without any money. She is presently employed as an NGO worker but does not receive a salary *per se*. She explains:

> *Since 1995 I have volunteered here at [name of NGO]. I get only an allowance for travel of 1000 pesos a month. We do not receive a salary at [name of NGO]. There are so many things you must sacrifice, but we [NGO workers] are happy. Now I am on the staff at [name of NGO]. I work for the Violence against women and with cultural groups, and on the committee for overseas workers.*

She has no intention of returning overseas and plans to stay on at the NGO and expand on the projects of the organisation. She has a 4-year-old son who attends the NGO day-care and who is also cared for by Mia's sister. She adds that if she could get financial support in the form of a scholarship, "in the future I would take journalism or psychology, maybe through evening courses. It is not so much money but I don't have any." She hopes the NGO where she works could help her or "Sisters at Saint Scholastica College".

Since returning Delia has not been employed full time although she explains that occasionally she is asked to provide training workshops: "Sometimes I train day-care workers. I went to Nueva Ecija last week to give a three day training. They paid my expenses only. No salary." She also occasionally helps her sister in the *sari sari* store (which is attached to her sister's house where she is living). During our interview Delia frequently went out to the *sari sari* store to help customers we could see from the dining room window. She highlights some of the problems she faced since returning to the Philippines, "Lack of a job is my biggest problem right now. I have no [recent] Philippine work experience and what I learned at school I have forgotten now." She admits that she is not looking for a job in the Philippines right now because "the salaries are too low" but is " just planning to go out again, to Europe, Canada, Australia..." as an ODW. She has applied with an agency but as of yet she has not secured an ODW job.

Val has found a temporary job that "pays a little" since returning from overseas: "I had the blessing of God. God sent me a job as secretary for Avon. My salary is only 3000 [pesos] a month." She explains that overseas experience (particularly ODW experience) does not help one to get a job in the Philippines. She adds, "It helps if you want to go abroad again [though because] it seems like you are better able to adjust but in the Philippines it makes no difference in helping to get a job." She gave what was left of her savings to one of her friends at the migrant workers' shelter who did not have the money to pay for her processing fees for going abroad. But she rationalises that she is able to survive on this small salary from Avon because she is living at the migrant shelter in Manila. She plans to leave soon for Hong Kong where she will work as an ODW.

During her time back in the Philippines Val has been enrolled in part time studies. She explains that with the encouragement of her ex-employer in Saudi Arabia she has taken some courses for becoming a dental technician but could not complete the program.

> *My [ex] employer in Saudi, he was advising me to study medical courses. I did the theoretical but for the practical I would have to spend 200,000 [pesos]. I had my tutor for two months. [What is] lacking is only the laboratory. With the laboratory it*

> *is too expensive. Yes, because of the laboratory and the technician there you must have to pay a lot so I stopped. I stopped. I would spend 10,000 [pesos] for the laboratory and that is good for one month only. So I cannot pay that much now. I am not stable yet. And all my savings are gone already. [Laughs]. I withdraw my savings to help those in need. So, for myself, I just pray. I want to go back to the dental school and finish. I want really but I think I need to go overseas and then because if I am in Hong Kong [working as an ODW] or if I go in the States somehow [laughs, perhaps because she had said earlier that she hopes to marry an American pen-pal] well then my contract is there [and there would be no chance to return to my studies].*

Cher was one of the participants who returned with no money and was deeper in debt than when she left. She explains, "When I came back I had no money and I had no job when I returned." She got pregnant within 10 days of returning to the Philippines and is now the mother of an infant in addition to her two older children (aged 4 and 6 years). She states that she cannot work (for a salary) because caring for the baby and her other children takes most of her time but suggests that later she may "sell charcoal or *halo halo*" from home to supplement the family income. She adds that "of course" she would consider going overseas again when the baby is older but only if her passport problem is sorted out "because I will never be allowed out of the Philippines unless I change my name and [reapply for] another passport." She adds that if she could afford to she would be very interested in going to college to take a computer course.

Since returning from Brunei seven years ago Dawn has been unemployed (a stay at home mother and later when she and her new husband got together she became "a housewife" while they lived in Manila for a year and then in Cagayan for five months). She took a computer course when she was living in Manila but she explains, "The computer discs are too expensive so I studied only for one month but I did not finish." Now that they are back in Dawn's home village she is "an unemployed housewife" but is looking for a job. She explains that she is "not desperate because my husband gives me an allowance [laughs]." She adds that she is two months pregnant with her fourth child so whatever job she finds it will be temporary. She explains that she would consider going abroad again but only to Canada although she points out other problems, "Right now I cannot go because I am having a kid and I don't know [if I could go] because my auntie is too old to look after the other kids and the baby if I go abroad again."

Bella is a volunteer "organiser" for Kanlungan – an NGO in a neighbouring town, although she has plans for income generating projects for her NGO which will provide her and the members a little bit of money. Bella explains that she has been unsuccessful at finding a paying job, which she suspects could be because of discrimination.

> *In some agencies people are expecting us [returnees] to have a lot of money. They think we do not need to work because we have enough money, so we may not be hired. I have a friend who was a nurse who worked overseas and when she applied here the chief of staff at the hospital would not hire her because he thinks she probably has money already.*

She adds that people may also disregard one's qualifications simply because one's last job was an ODW: "Employers discriminate. They see that you were [an ODW]. There is discrimination here in the Philippines!" She also feels age discrimination is a problem:

> *I need only 18 more units and practice teaching and I will complete my Bachelor of Science in Elementary Education and I want [to finish] but I am thinking because I am 41 years old the government will not hire me anymore. I worry about age discrimination.*

Bella explains that although she could not find a job when she returned she attempted to make money through a "buy and sell" plan. She explains what happened:

> *I only had 10,000 pesos savings when I came back* [laughs]. *I tried to sell rice and corn but it did not provide enough money because people borrowed rice and corn without money for six months! I even got mad at the borrowers, but they did not pay me so I stopped it. I spent the rest of my savings on nothing. Nothing! It's gone.*

She believes she can make more of a difference to her community by organising an NGO with income generating projects, a fair money lending plan for the NGO members, and professional support for returning ODWs who are "psychiatric cases". She feels that living on the low wages of her husband is something she has come to grips with thanks to "a change in attitude" and "learning how to budget".

Tessy explains that she had very little savings when she returned to the Philippines:

> *I didn't manage to save the salary I got. With the two months' salary that I was given [from the second job] I bought gifts for my family. It was only equivalent to*

> *US $270 a month. Very little. And when you change to pesos it is only 5000 pesos. So there's nothing left.*

She is working as a substitute kindergarten teacher for a teacher who is on maternity leave and although there are no full-time permanent jobs available in her area she has hopes of teaching "non-formal education courses to adults and out-of-school youth, such as dress-making, hairstyling, cooking... for them to learn [a trade]. It is a project of the government. I will teach at Marcos College with pay." She has already attended a three-day training last month. However, from previous experience she knows teaching adults is not easy,

> *[Before I went overseas] I took 'Literacy Facilitators' - a three day training. We taught literacy in the Ilocano language. It is a government project. It is very hard to reach our goal, you know? It is difficult to teach adults. They are stubborn because they think they know everything and we have to respect the old ones. I say [to them], "Oh, mother this is good for you to learn." "No!" [they say]. It is difficult so we have to motivate, encourage and explain to them. And because it is non-formal I will get only 1000 pesos a month.*

She states that she is willing to relocate without her family if there was a job somewhere in the Philippines as she did once before. She also declares,

> *There are no jobs in the Philippines that's why if I have a chance I would go overseas again, but the processing is expensive. But if somebody will help me [I would go] because I need to help my mother and father. They are old and nobody will support them because all my sisters and brothers are married and are living in a far place. I would go to a country with a higher salary, like Hong Kong. They [friends] told me that Hong Kong has a high salary and it is very nice. But I have no money. I have no chance and I am teaching now. And because I will teach non-formal [educational courses] and I will get only 1000 pesos a month. A very low salary.*

She has to complete a thesis in order for her to graduate with a Masters degree, but insists that this will not happen "because I have no money. For thesis writing you have to spend a lot of money."

Tonnette helps operate her *sari-sari* store and cares for her family. "I have a *sari-sari* store now. I used the money I saved to open this store." She did not look for work upon returning because she has always intended to return to Kuwait as an ODW. In fact she is set to go the next month after my interview, to the same employer she had before.

> *It will be a direct hire. I will be given 60 KD (8400 pesos) a month. I am not worried. The baby [of the employer] is growing up now. I have a contract for two years. I paid the medical bills only and the passport and visa also with my savings.*

She explains her reasons for wanting to return overseas:

> *I want to go abroad again because I do not have enough money. We have 5 children. Two are in college already. Three are in high school. I want to go to back to Kuwait. I know the attitude of the Kuwaitis now and I know the dialect and everything.*

She has no intention of going to college or taking a course because "I am too old now".

Teri had no savings when she returned to the Philippines. She also separated from her husband soon after returning and he has refused to pay child support for their son so she is struggling financially. She is working as a faith healer from which she receives only donations that she does not keep for herself. She is surviving with help from her mother but she does not elaborate. She explains her future plans underscoring that her lack of money is standing in her way of reaching these goals:

> *Maybe I will go again abroad. My first employer asked me to go back. I want to but I got no savings, no money, no earnings. Without money it is difficult. I want to go to another country, like Taiwan or Hong Kong to work as a Domestic Helper. Or I stay here in the Philippines and open a business like a buy and sell, a grocery or* sari-sari *store and take care of my son. But I don't have money for that now. I would like really to continue my education. I want to take computer and I want to teach - to be a teacher, but it is too expensive to go to college. I cannot go. I am not old and I am not young but as long as I want to know more knowledge, I am interested in learning more if there is a way.*

Ta Ta who has been abroad three times and returned each time without savings or with very little savings has been making a living through various income generating projects (like sewing and swine-raising). Unfortunately she has not found permanent work. She is now organising a new NGO in her area. Through this NGO she and each of the members make a little bit of money through livelihood projects. However, she is making plans to go overseas again and like her other three overseas jobs she will go illegally. She enthusiastically describes the job she will take:

> *I am not worried. Brunei is safer. For me, there is a big difference to being a laundry worker at a hotel and a Domestic Helper. The burden is light. There will be*

> *30 people together, not alone, not like the domestic helper and the pay is too high. The ODW's wage is too low. We will be having our own apartment. We have 30,000 and we can pay 10,000 for our expenses. That is still 20,000 pesos for saving. There are a lot of Filipinos living there so maybe we can rent a house together for sleeping only. I have a friend who works at a hotel here in Davao and she said everything else is free. Food, soap, everything is free, so you can save.*

She elaborates on her plan and her future goal:

> *I will miss my family but I will go for one year only. I don't want to go for longer [than that]. I will send [remittances] to the third daughter. I can trust her. She will know what to cook and what to buy. She can manage everything. I know how much I need. I know I can save. I know how much I need to start a business. A bakery is good. That is my long, long [term] ambition, to start my own bakery. I need 100,000 pesos or something. I can start with one kind of bread. It is* pan-de-sal. *It is not so sweet. It has salt, shortening, flour... This bread is very soft. It is so small, you can squeeze it [and it will be] too small. It is an early morning bread you have with coffee at dawn. Later on with an income I could start with another kind of bread, not expensive breads. Then later on I can start with cakes and pastries. I have attended a baking seminar. It was only one week, but we have all the copies of the recipes. Everything was paid for by OWWA.*

She states that returning to college is not out of her realm of possibilities but money is the main issue.

> *At my age, if only I can, I should like to go back to college. I really love figures. Accounting. My course was in Commerce and it can really help me. For me, even though I am nearly 50 [pauses], because I have a friend graduated from college at 50 years old. See?*
>
> *SB: So age does not matter?*
>
> *B: Whaaa!* [Making a gesture with her right hand as if shooing a fly away from in front of her face]. *No, I don't care. If I had the money I would go of course, yes. My daughter said, "Oh, Mama we will be classmates!"* [Laughs].

Since Marcie returned she had been unemployed for two years, occasionally earning money through making and selling candies but "the profit was not good." After two years she opened a *carinderia* [small restaurant]. It has about four tables covered with flower printed vinyl table clothes with white plastic chairs on either side of each table crowded together in an uncovered cemented area - approximately 8 by 12 feet in diameter. The cooking area is behind a counter, which has four stools pushed up to it. It has an inner lower counter with two hot plates, a telephone, cooking utensils and food supplies kept neatly behind the cook [which was her husband while she was being interviewed for this study]. Overhead the cooking area is covered with tin roofing nailed onto a sloping wooden frame. A refrigerator stands between the cooking area and a doorway, which leads to the family's living area.

Marcie explains:

> *This [carinderia] is small, outdoors and simple. Not too many tables but it is a good business. It is very "in". I like to cook. There are now so many carinderias in this area now. There are three on this block alone. But I have regular customers and I got experience. I can save money if my husband is working. Now he is working with rent-a-car so we bought a washing machine.*

She tells of her plans for the future:

> *I want to teach aerobics in September. I [had] stopped doing this. I want money for my daughter. I dream this place will be bigger. I will branch out like Jollibee [a popular fast food Filipino franchise] and I want all my kids to finish their schooling.*

Roe has been unemployed since returning home but she is leaving soon for an ODW job in Hong Kong. She plans to open a grocery store with her savings when she returns after two years and she and her husband plan to have children. She adds that although she doubts she would go to college because of lack of time and money, she would like to go to college to learn to be a pastor. "I am Catholic but I heard about being a pastor from a bible study group in Singapore."

### Economic reintegration through enterprises and income generating projects

The participants and organisations that help returnees frequently suggest small enterprises or income-generating projects as a means of re-integrating returnees into the Philippine economy. One of the mandates of OWWA according to officials I interviewed at OWWA and according to the RA 8042 is to help returnees reintegrate by offering short term business or skills training seminars and providing loans to establish small livelihood projects. Many participants mentioned the role of OWWA highlighting, however, their sense of frustration at OWWA's inability to assist them. Only one participant, Ta Ta accessed OWWA's loans and seminars. The other participants either did not know about OWWA's programs, had heard negative things about OWWA and would not seek their help, or they had been turned down for assistance. This following are the responses of the participants on the topic of OWWA's assistance.

*a) Government assistance (OWWA)*

When asked how OCWs learn of the programs that OWWA offers, the OWWA official I interviewed, Ms. Estella replied, "Well that is one of the things we have to work on…" She was interrupted by the other official being interviewed along with her. Mr. Abbot interjected, "Most OCWs know about our programs already through sports activities and leadership forums and community outreach activities and we advertise our services." (Personal interview with Ms. Estella and Mr. Abott, January 20, 1998). However despite his assertion many of the participants did not know about OWWA's programs.

In response to the question what do you know about OWWA, Marcie replied, "I don't know about OWWA and I've never asked OWWA or the POEA for help". Cher similarly replied, "I don't know anything about OWWA. Nobody told me about OWWA so I don't have any information about their programs. They didn't tell us about OWWA at the PDOS." Mia proclaims, "I knew nothing about any government agency that could help. Not the POEA, not OWWA, not the DFA, nothing." She felt a sense of hopelessness when in prison because she had no one to turn to for help. She does not elaborate on whether the Philippine embassy was made aware of her imprisonment in Singapore. Roe states, "I never went to OWWA. I am not a member of OWWA but I want to become a member but I did not go to apply." She adds that what she knows of OWWA came from informally speaking with friends. "I hear from friends that OWWA is very helpful. They will help [by] giving loans for a house and a lot and capital." Delia declares, "I didn't go to OWWA for help. If you go to ask for help they will help you but if you don't go there they do not help. I do not want their help."

Teri claims she does not know about the loans but then explains that she had received information from them about her eligibility for loans:

> *I don't know about OWWA's loans. I do not want to ask them for help. I hate them. After two or five years back in the Philippines, only then can they let you borrow. They take too long. They explained this to us already. You must wait your turn. How many OCWs ask for help already? I am at the end of the list. I can't wait that long.*

Bella received similar information when she made an application with them. She explains:

> *I heard of OWWA's loans but when I tried to apply in Baguio the processing is so long because they prioritise applications from 1990 to 1995. I was from 1995 so they told me maybe after three or four years I might have a loan. I will have to wait and of course I have to show collateral.*

Dawn also believes that the government through OWWA must live up to its true role of helping OCWs in need. She elaborates:

> *The government must give their full support to OCWs especially those who have legal cases abroad and have nothing and no one to depend on. Only the government can help them. That is the job of OWWA.*

Marcie offers similar thoughts about the role of government/OWWA at both during and post-ODW stages:

> *[At the During stage] they should monitor [OCWs] if the government knows a Filipino is working somewhere. ... They should make a home visit, house to house ... to give them a feeling that someone cares. ... They could mail letters for the OCWs and the OCWs could ask questions... The money is there. The OCWs pay a fee to the OWWA and there are a lot of OCWs, so they should be taken care of. [At the post-ODW stage] the government could also give capital for business so more OCWs have a fighting chance of [making a] living in the Philippines.*

Mia also complains about the lack of money being used for helping OCWs and the resultant risks that OCWs experience. She explains:

> *The government does not provide services to OCWs. There is no financial protection to offer the OCWs. That is why there is violence experienced by the workers. There will continue to be large numbers of OCWs going and it may increase in number because of the economic crisis yet the government does not do what it should do for the OCWs.*

Val offers this scathing comment about OWWA: "There is corruption in OWWA. They help OCWs who have money already. The poor ones they don't help." Mia also accuses OWWA of corruption, which she has "heard about" through "people talking." Daily newspapers and NGOs' newsletters for migrant workers such as Kanlungan's "TNT" and Kaibigan's "Pinoy Overseas Migration Portfolio" have reported that there are several examples of graft and corruption in OWWA. For instance, in Kanlungan's July - September, 1997 issue of TNT newsletter some of the examples highlighted are: a 3.2 million pesos contract was awarded by OWWA to a corporation without the benefit of a public bidding; more than 33 million pesos allocated for livelihood loans are unaccounted for; airline tickets that were 'donated' by a top official who owns a travel agency were charged to OWWA; salaries of 100,000 pesos were paid to "ghost employees" (employees who don't exist); and the money raised to aid Filipino communities through concerts given at job-sites abroad in the *Hatid-Saya* program has not been accounted for as the communities were never identified. It has been alleged that the so-called communities were the embassy personnel themselves. Moreover, OWWA's purchase of a condemned building in Pasay City for their headquarters in 1992 which cost 68 million pesos – more than double its bidding price - appears suspicious since less than a year earlier OWWA claimed that it did not have enough funds to send home thousands of migrant workers during the Gulf War. The Gancayo Commission investigating the OWWA expenses found that the 77 million pesos allocated for renovation of the building rose to more than 130 million pesos. The newsletter goes on to state that as of December 1994 the OWWA fund was worth 3.22 billion yet OWWA was losing money and has cut back on its services. A review of the 1995 OWWA budget revealed that travelling expenses of OWWA workers amounted to 2.746,664.46 pesos while only 193,418 pesos was spent on the Workers' Assistance Program.

Ta Ta was the only participant who had direct experience with, and help from OWWA. She tells how she became involved. "I got involved because my mother told OWWA that I had worked illegally in Malaysia. OWWA spotted me in the files and they called me." She explains her participation:

> *I attended OWWA's consultation seminars about the plight of migrant women. Since 1992 I have attended three consultation seminars in Manila. All expenses were paid. I talked about the problems of OCWs and what the government can do. They [OWWA] want to improve their services, help people group together at the job-site. This is helpful, especially in the community.*

She emphasises the OWWA seminars as being particularly interesting and helpful:

> *I have been to so many seminars! Yeah, I am a jack-of-all-trades, but master of none, so I do not want to miss any. They [OWWA] gave us all. They gave us many things to help us, all the Kuwait and Iraq returnees, to start a new life. It is not so easy coming from a country of war. I took seminars in baking, sewing, leadership, so many seminars! ...whatever seminar, if they say, "[Ta Ta], you want to attend?" [I say] "OK, I'll attend!" I say to my mother, "Mama, I have to attend another seminar!" She says to me, "Again? Another seminar?" "Mama, please!" [I say to her]. "OK" [she says]. So I attend every seminar. Yeah I do. I like to get so many ideas.*

She had positive things to say about the Administration but she admits that she got "an emergency fund of 3000 pesos, which I did not have to pay back" and a loan of 7000 pesos and help "because they know me. If they know you then processing [for the loan] is not so difficult." OWWA knows her well because of the seminars and consultations she has attended regularly over the past three years. She explains that with the loan from OWWA and additional help through an NGO, she established a small sewing business:

> *Unlad Kabayan [a migrant workers' NGO] helped us. We established an OCW Co-operative, sponsored by OWWA, in 1992. We manufactured native products like wallets and we went to trading fairs. Each member sold something different. We put three percent of our earnings into the co-operative's gross profit. I bought a sewing machine with my money and I got the OWWA loan of 7000 pesos to buy materials. So from 1992 to 1995 I made a living with sewing.*

She explains that if OCWs do not receive help it may be because they are not "receptive":

> *OWWA is pretty helpful. Yeah! But I do not know why. They help, but you know, not all Filipinos are satisfied because not all are being helped. They say in Davao City OWWA has only five personnel so how can we [OCWs] manage unless we group ourselves, if we have no initiative? So we have to group ourselves. The OWWA can help with seminars and training and referrals. If we need something, certain [government] agencies can help. OWWA helps only those OCWs [who] are receptive of them. There are some Filipino Overseas Workers, they don't mind attending seminars, others do. It depends on the mentality.*

As she is now in the process of organising her new NGO she will ask OWWA to come and talk to her members so they will be informed properly about what the administration does. She explains:

> *I will seek the help of OWWA. I will draft a letter for the request of ... OWWA to give a seminar on what it can do for the members. Because you know there are people who really do not believe in government offices. In our group there is one member, a female, who is negative really. She had a bad experience but no matter how I explain to her, you know what do you call this? [pauses]... they are negative about their experiences, the objectives, their plans... OK, OK, so I said I will let the OWWA talk to them. OWWA will give an orientation about what are the objectives of government offices for all OCWs.*

However, Ta Ta points out one of the main complaints that returning ODWs have about income generating projects is that there is an assumption that anyone can get a loan and start a business and experience success, which she through her own experience knows is not true for most. On this note, one returning entertainer I interviewed "Cecile" declared sarcastically,

> *OWWA? [Laughs.] OWWA offers nothing. You have to try to find out yourself about loans. They say you should establish a business with [a] 5000 pesos loan. How can you start a business with only 5000 pesos? They told us you should go into business and it is to be paid back in one year. One year. [Laughs]. Maybe it can help some [ODWs] but how about us? We are not professionals. We have as of yet established any business. What if that business fails? That is the problem. How could we [re]pay OWWA?*

*b) non-government assistance*

In addition to OWWA many NGOs also promote income-generating projects as an alternative to going overseas again. Although the idea is a logical one, participants explain how income- generating projects often fail citing marketing and cultural problems.

For example, Ta Ta explains how her sewing business eventually became less and less economically viable:

> *The handicrafts have no market. It is only for the foreigners and I cannot afford to have a store. I couldn't afford materials when I got a big order so I can only do small orders. So I lost big contracts.*

Ta Ta also went into swine-raising and although she and her group have had more success with this project than the sewing business she highlights some of the difficulties:

> *The market is strong when you deal with products for daily needs. We have maybe five pigs in one month because the market is strong. Because 30 000 pesos [the amount the group will have once all members pay their dues] is really not much. Because you know one pig costs 5000 pesos and we have to butcher four or five at one time. If we buy now five pigs, that is already 25,000 pesos. And after that we cannot buy again because we have not enough money. We will have to wait for the payment for the first five pigs. We really have to have 75,000 pesos to make a rolling business instead of waiting and waiting another month to get the piglet and get another payment.*

She also points out that for cultural reasons she and her group will have to diversify their products:

> *Because in April, you know Catholics do not eat meat. So we will have to sell dried fish because it is Holy Week. So we will eventually go into pigs, chicken, fresh fish and dried fish. It will be a good business then when we get all these products on the market but we need more money to get it rolling.*

Bella also speaks of swine-raising as a project she had become involved in before going overseas and in buying and selling corn and rice after she returned. She declared both ventures unsuccessful because her customers, who were her neighbours, frequently did not pay her for the meat, corn or rice, which left her too broke to buy more corn, rice or pigs. She explains that for cultural and moral reasons she could not refuse food to people who needed it even if she doubted she would receive payment.

Despite problems with the income generating projects they experienced in the past both Ta Ta and Bella feel that through the new NGOs they are establishing, income generating has a role to play. Ta Ta explains: "We [returnees] have to have initiative. We should help ourselves. If we depend on the government we cannot live. We need to find something that is marketable and make money through [income-generating projects]." Bella also supports the idea of income generating projects as the main way to help ODWs who are planning to return:

> *But women here plan to go overseas again so we have to try to give them jobs. It is too hard to go overseas, especially with the discrimination. We need to give them chances of making income through dress-making, handicrafts like soft broom making and baskets, processing* obee *jam to sell and peanut butter too.*

In the next section, the participants elaborate on their involvement with NGOs including the income generating projects they are establishing.

### Analysis

Six participants returned with savings (cash in hand) to show for their time abroad (Ta Ta [on one of her overseas jobs], Tonnette, Bella, Delia, Val, Marcie). Their savings ranged from 2500 (Ta Ta) to 10,000 pesos (Bella). With her savings Delia purchased "a piece of land in the countryside", Tonnette, Marcie, and Bella put their savings toward their small businesses (*sari-sari* store, restaurant, and a "buy and sell" business respectively), Val lent her money to friends, and Ta Ta used hers to pay back some debts upon return. Participants Teri and Tessy spent all their savings in the host country to buy *pàsalubong* (returning gifts for family). Roe, Mia, Cher, and Dawn did not have any savings when they returned. Bella, Delia, Val, Marcie, Roe, Teri, Tessy, and Dawn had been sending remittances home, which were used for the family-household's daily living expenses (rent, food, clothes, and school fees). Mia, Cher, Teri (in one of her ODW jobs) and Ta Ta were not paid (although in Ta Ta's case she was paid but all her earnings went to pay back the traffickers) so were not able to remit during their time away.

A survey conducted by OWWA (1991) indicates similar circumstances for returnees. The survey summary reports that very few were able to save money and those that did saved only one to five thousand pesos; one fourth were able to set up a business (mainly sari-sari stores); two fifths were able to buy land; less than one fourth purchased appliances and other consumer durables, and a negligible number purchased motor vehicles (Tujan, 1995).

Of the twelve participants seven are presently unemployed (actively seeking employment), one is temporarily employed, one is a full- time homemaker (not actively seeking employment), two are self employed in their own small businesses, and one is employed with an NGO. Two of the unemployed are volunteering their time to establish their own NGOs. Three of the unemployed participants are going back overseas within the next month: Two will work as ODWs and one will work in housekeeping in a hotel. Seven of the participants would like to go back overseas but for various reasons (e.g. pregnant, cannot afford the processing fees, do not have a reliable childcare substitute, have not yet been offered an ODW job) they cannot go right away. Only one of the participants has gone back to the career for which she was educated (Tessy who is a teacher). All the other participants declare that they will not return to their previous types of work because of *deskilling*, lost interest in the work or there is no work of that nature available. (Dawn adds that in addition to the fact that she has little interest in returning to midwifery she would not go back to it because her instruments are old, rusted and broken.) Arcinas (1991) would not be surprised by this as he found in his study that 50 percent of Filipino returnees had to change occupations (especially those who had been employed in technical and service jobs overseas while only 23 percent of returning construction workers had to change occupation).

The women explain that some of the problems they have faced in finding employment since returning to the Philippines relate to discrimination [age discrimination, discrimination based on past ODW job, and discrimination based on the assumption that returnees must be "rich already" (Delia, Bella)], a lack of recent Philippine work experience, *deskilling*, and mainly that there are simply no jobs available.

Congressman Condazo reiterates the last point that the economy cannot re-absorb returnees and links it to the processes of liberalisation and globalisation.

> *Really the problem [of reintegration of migrant workers] is not the availability of skill but availability of jobs. Right now we already have people lining up for jobs. We don't lack the skills we lack the opportunity. The unemployment rate is high, between 9 and 11 percent. If we re-absorb the returnees it will be at the expense of those already employed so we have to create more jobs. The government is not on the right track. The source of the problem is globalisation [laughs]. I'll give you an example. My own district Malagina we produce shoes. 70 percent are dependent on shoe making. Small shops employing ten or 15 workers each. We export some shoes. We provide many shoes to various parts of the country. With this globalisation and liberalisation comes the entry of cheap shoes. Now can you imagine? China sells shoes for 90 pesos a pair. That is even less than our production cost. As a result 60 shoe factories close down every year. That's liberalisation and globalisation!* (Personal interview, January 26, 1998).

Congressman Candazo's comments clearly depicts some of the major problems returnees face, which are related to the economic woes of the country. In Chapter 2, section (a) a backdrop was provided which illustrated the conditions which led to the present day level of migration of Filipino OCWs. The present day conditions that promote migration are also the same conditions, which make reintegration of returnees difficult. These conditions include the mal-developed economy, which has resulted in low-incomes, widespread poverty affecting more than 70 percent of the population and a very low standard of living (Tujan, 1995). The mal-developed economy that Tujan (1995) refers to is oriented to commodity exports and relies on imports of high priced manufactured items, which places the country and its people in a precarious position in the global economy. Some of the newer economic activities, such as garment manufacturing, create only low-skill and low-wage jobs that have not greatly raised the standard of living for a majority of the people. Government policies, which are in line with the IMF's demands means that the country continues to be open to and heavily dependent on foreign investors. The policies of liberalisation and privatisation of government services as well as the far-reaching influences of globalisation (which Congressman Candazo referred to above) have contributed to poverty and unemployment.

Tujan (1995) declares that the high rate of unemployment and the existence of a large reserve army of labour that cannot be absorbed and helps to keep Philippine wages low are the problems that encourage migration. He asserts that the unemployment figure, which the Congressman above claims is between 9 and 11 percent and which according to official figure is 11.4 percent (as of January 2001, Philippine census, 2001) is actually much higher. He claims that when underemployed workers such as the "semi-proletarians" who "have no recourse but to try to make a living as itinerant vendors, part-time workers, individual hire workers, seasonal agricultural workers and the like" (p.7) are included, the unemployed level is actually 40 percent. As stated in the introduction of this chapter, women are very much affected by the current economic climate. Forty two percent of permanently displaced workers between January and November, 2001 were women. Women's unemployment rate has increased from 9.9 percent to 10.3 percent in 2001 as more women than men joined the labour force during that period. Currently, 9.2 million women are still looking for work (CWR, 2002).

The problems that the participants have faced in finding jobs since returning are reflected in many studies on migrant returnees in developing countries (see Arcinas, 1991; Battistella, 1997; Dumon, 1986; Eelenes, 1992; Gilani, 1986; Go, 1986; Gunatilleke, 1991; ILO-ARTEP, 1987; Khan, 1991; Mahmood, 1991; Nair, 1991; Paganoni and Reyes, 1986; Pongsapich, 1991; Rogers, 1990; Roongshivin *et al*, 1986). Not only do these studies indicate that finding employment is the biggest problem returnees face, the unemployment rate is even higher after returning than it was before departing, due to some extent to migrants' unwillingness to accept lower salaries and their difficulties in readjusting to consumption habits (Battistella, 1997). Battistella (1997) supports the participants' assertions that overseas experience is not particularly helpful in finding employment when back in the Philippines because no new skills were gained overseas and ODWs with degrees were unable to utilise their skills and knowledge (resulting in deskilling). Arcinas (1991) offers further confirmation on this point by his finding that returning OCWs like construction workers for example, who have gained valued skills and experience while overseas find employment more quickly than those who had been service workers.

On Bella's point about discrimination against returnees who are perceived as "rich already", Fr Prigol (of ECMI) supports her assertion declaring, "Some people [in society] say, 'Those that migrate are rich, why help them?' and that is why there are no programs." Battistella (1997) acknowledges the "potential discrimination… which already perceives migrants as privileged because of the opportunity of high earning employment overseas" is a barrier.

A survey of returning migrants conducted by ILO-ARTEP (1987) suggests that for some returnees, unemployment is a choice while seeking the best opportunities, especially those returnees who have savings from their overseas work, as in Delia's case. Khan (1991) confirms this suggestion stating that unemployment may be a transition phase during which a returnee is adjusting to the idea that employment in the home country will be lower salaried than what she earned overseas. The length of this transition phase varies but Battistella (1997) found that in the Philippines the mean waiting time for returnees from the Middle East is 30 months.

Participants Delia, Val, Roe, Tonnette, and Ta Ta however, indicate that although they are in what could be called a transition phase of unemployment or temporary low-paying employment they are mainly waiting for an overseas job opportunity to come up. (Roe, Tonnette, and Ta Ta already have job offers and will depart soon, while Delia and Val have put in applications to recruitment agencies and expect to leave within a few months). Paganoni and Reyes (1986) and Go (1986) verify that most Filipino OCWs (61 to 67 percent) are unemployed because they are looking for another overseas job.

Although OCWs, through their cash remittances, contribute substantially to the Philippine economy when they are overseas (approximately 55.1 billion pesos from April to September, 2000, [People's Media Centre, 2001]) basically propping up the bankrupt economy, their "reward" from government upon return is practically non-existent. At the post-ODW stage the government provides very little in terms of helping ODWs (in fact all OCWs) reintegrate into the economy through re-education/training or indeed some sort of "affirmative action".

Saith (1989) declares that some retraining is necessary for all unemployed returnees and this recommendation has been reiterated by several participants some of whom have had some sort of training since returning (e.g. Tessy, Ta Ta, Mia and Bella). With the exception of Tessy (who was trained through "a project of the government"), the retraining the participants received was through NGOs or in Ta Ta's case through OWWA sponsored programs.

*Government assistance in economic re-integration*

The main support that the government provides OCWs is through OWWA. At the post-ODW stage OWWA is responsible for assisting OCW returnees re-integrate into the economy. In an interview with OWWA official, Mr. Abott, the role of OWWA at the post-OCW stage is elaborated as follows:

> *In the returning phase, we have re-integration programs, which encourage OCWs to invest their earnings through livelihood programs. They [returnees] may go through business or skills training seminars. Short-term courses for OCWs and their dependants are provided for a minimum of 15 days and a maximum of 6 to 10 months. Tuition is free and transportation costs are provided. These courses: dress-making, hair-culture, baking, secretarial, auto-mechanics and waitering, etc. are offered through accredited partners all over the Philippines. We provide loans, or assistance to find a bank that would offer a loan, for small businesses. We provide a maximum of 50,000 pesos (US$1500). We are in the process of evaluating this program.* (Personal interview, January 20, 1998).

The Migrant Workers and Overseas Filipino Act of 1995 (RA 8042) acknowledges the particular difficulties ODWs and entertainers face when they return and the suggested solution in the RA 8042, section 17 is for OWWA to formulate a special program aimed at this group that would further help them re-integrate into the economy. This program would assist returnees by providing them training for livelihood and entrepreneurial projects. This was proposed seven years ago but has not yet come into existence. Other suggestions include a Migrant Workers Scholarship Fund. According to OWWA officials:

> *The Migrant Workers Scholarship Fund is still on the drawing board. It was proposed in 1995, but has not as yet taken off. It will be implemented by various departments in Science and Technology. This program would provide tuition fees and stipends in Science and Technology. This would be for economic development of the Philippines, not to return overseas. There should be a contract between the scholar and OWWA to state they will stay in the Philippines. We also provide upgrading and training courses for sea-men too.* (Personal interview with Ms.Estella and Mr. Abott, January 20, 1998).

The suggested proposals remain "on the drawing board" and have yet to benefit returnees. Also, as the participants stated above OWWA's ability to assist them have been ineffectual because only a small portion of returnees may avail of the programs. In this study, only one participant benefited from OWWA's programs (but whether the most recent help the organisation has provided her will have a long-term positive effect on her life remains to be seen. The previous livelihood projects she was assisted with were unsustainable).

Most of the participants expressed frustration with and distrust of OWWA and although all legal OCWs must become OWWA members and must pay a membership fee (costing equivalent of US$25 [personal interview with OWWA officials, 1998]) most of the participants complained of not receiving any (or sufficient) information about the organisation and its programs. (Ironically the only participant who received assistance from OWWA was neither a legal OCW nor a member of OWWA.)

NGO workers Miriam Tugawin and Nana Fernandez of the NGO Kanlungan, Centre for migrant workers in Quezon City make a similar charge:

> *The women [OCWs] do not know of the programs OWWA offers. OWWA keeps it a secret. Only when individual cases of OCWs in trouble are brought out, only then do they [at OWWA] give help. We wanted a book about the regulations that OWWA has but they refused to give us one. That is how they keep their information to themselves.* (Personal interview, January 23, 1998)

Those who do know of the livelihood programs OWWA offers, the "red tape" and "length of time waiting puts [returnees] off" from receiving help (Personal interview with Ms. Villalba, executive director of Unlad Kabayan, February 5, 1998). A few participants provide examples of this red tape and waiting. Some had attempted to get assistance from

OWWA but were turned down (or told to come back after more than two years) because there are hundreds of returnees who are still waiting after several years to receive a loan. The regulation of helping only those who have been back in the country three to five years (which is the result of a backlog of applicants) does nothing to dissuade returnees from returning back overseas as their economic needs are immediate and cannot be put off for several years. Also, showing collateral is often problematic after this length of time as savings and possibly purchases will no longer exist as the family-household has had to manage without the remittances it had previously been relying on. Additionally, those returnees who do get loans for livelihood projects are faced with the problem the participants describe above, e.g. lack of business experience, inability to market their products or services, and lack of adequate funds to keep the business going. Congressman Candoza expands on other problems:

> *OWWA has some livelihood programs and they extend loans to workers. But you know these are very limited programs. For one the preparation of documents is a very tedious job and you can't imagine a domestic worker preparing a feasibility study* [laughs and continues to giggle to end of sentence] *on a livelihood project. Second, reintegration is a problem. Well they undertake some training in some classes but really the problem is [as I said] not the availability of skill but availability of jobs.* (Personal interview, January 26, 1998)

According to many studies only a small group of returnees are successful with self-employment. For example, Anonuevo (2002) claims 70 percent of enterprises established by former migrant workers go bankrupt. Typical enterprises are in services (like Marcie's and Tonnette's small businesses) and transportation (such as operating a taxi as Bella's husband does or owning a jeepney or tricycle as Mia had wished for). The barriers to success are related to a lack of sufficient savings or expertise, information and management skills but more importantly the poor economy, which cannot sustain these enterprises (Battistella, 1997; Anonuevo, 2002). Executive director of the NGO Balikabayani, Mai Anonuevo elaborates:

> *If they [returnees] really want to have a business they should first learn how to manage an enterprise while they are working abroad. You cannot learn it overnight. But the problem is when they return home with so much capital, they have to decide at a shortest possible time or else it will be spent on some other things.* (cited in Cabuag, 2002: 2)

*Non-government Organisations assistance in economic re-integration*

The majority of the participants declare that in the post-ODW stage, as in the pre-departure and during stages, the NGOs (some more than others) are much more helpful to them than the GOs (namely OWWA). The help that most of the participants were looking for was immediate assistance with, for example, temporary shelter, legal and emotional support and counselling, income generating projects, loans, etc., and non-formal and informal education that deal with training (i.e. business training, doing feasibility studies, making applications for loans or to register with the Co-operative Development Authority [CDA]), as well as education about broader migration issues, women's issues, and ways of working in solidarity with others to make societal changes.

Presently many of the participants are surviving on small incomes (or have attempted to make money) from occasional self-employed undertakings in the informal sector such as candy making, swine-raising, sewing, buying and selling, and faith healing. Some participants took up these jobs on their own and others received some training and/or financial support from NGOs.

Many NGOs express the necessity of helping returnees find some means of immediate income as a way of dissuading them from returning overseas. NGO solutions often involve livelihood projects for which they may help finance and provide training, or they may simply direct the returnees to OWWA for assistance even though many NGO directors I interviewed acknowledged that these livelihood projects often fail, citing similar problems that the participants explained above. For example, the director of Kaibigan, Arnel de Guzman states:

> *We give an orientation informally when ODWs return to re-integrate but there are government programmes they may avail of such as business loans from OWWA. We encourage them to establish small businesses, trading, and establish co-operatives if they work together. So we refer them to OWWA. But the success rate is not very good because their businesses in trading and small stores are too small, not enough for re-integration.* (Personal interview, January 14, 1998)

Similarly, Father Prigol, the director of ECMI declares:

> *To encourage people to stay [after returning] we like to look at ways to encourage livelihood projects, to encourage returning OCWs to use their remittances wisely, to encourage them to use their savings. But with this we are not overly successful. The economic crisis in this country affects the success rate and their standard of living has been raised from working overseas, but how to come to terms with this in the Philippines?* [Leaves question hanging.] (Personal interview, January 22, 1998)

Two workers of Kanlungan, Miriam Tugawin and Nana Fernandez, further elaborate, highlighting other problems related to the failure of livelihood projects:

> *We help those who return and their families with problems. ... Sometimes we provide livelihood programs. But the livelihood programs are very limited. We have a lack of resources. We may loan 5000 pesos to start an income-generating project, but livelihood projects are difficult. We do not have such delusions that they will be successful and that it will be enough because of the economic climate we have here in the Philippines. And co-operative types are difficult because in the city [the returnees] live far from each other, not like in the communities, for example in La Union where the women can unite. Here, small groups of OCW women have set up loans, etc. in a common fund. For those who want to try the livelihood program they must have training first. The Unlad Kabayan NGO gives this training because they have the experience.* (Personal interview, January 23, 1998)

Mayan Villalba, director of Unlad Kabayan explains that her organisation provides training on doing feasibility studies for a business and on establishing small businesses and co-operatives. She elaborates:

> *We set up rural organisations and help start businesses in goods and services. We provide technical assistance and credit for assisting in production [of goods] and we provide agricultural inputs [rice seedlings] and we are paid back with their harvests. We earn money because we buy rice from the wholesaler and the women sell it with five to 10 percent mark up. That mark up is lower than the local commercial sellers. We provide loans this way [i.e. loans of rice] but no cash.* (Personal interview, February 5, 1998)

Ms. Villalba makes it clear, however, that their success has not been that great for several reasons. Firstly, "businesses like sari-sari stores make very marginal profits. It's a survival level [of income] and many [returnees] don't think big and move up the ladder". On this point Ellen Sana of Kakammpi, a People's Organisation agrees proclaiming, "We are a nation of sari-sari stores! They [returnees] never reach large-scale industries. A sari-sari store is only a starting point" (Personal interview, February 5, 1998). Secondly, Ms. Villalba states, "Especially in the rural areas, capital inputs, irrigation and infrastructure are not readily available [e.g. for rice planting]". Thirdly, underscoring what Congressman Condazo stated earlier regarding the fact that international competition due to trade liberalisation has created too much competition for small businesses to survive, she states, "There is too much competition with selling rice. [Imported] rice from other countries is even cheaper than Philippine rice and sewing businesses have competition from cheaper imported garments from Taiwan". She stresses time and again that "sustainability at the local level is important. There has to be a local market because exporting products is difficult due to the devalued pesos". She warns that many returnees need "at least five years before their businesses will become stable" but adds the fact is many ODWs cannot sustain their businesses for that length of time.

Sister Myrna Tacardon of the Centre for Overseas Workers (COW) explains that the best way to help returnees is through a lending/borrowing scheme called "7-1-3". When a minimum number of 7 members join a 7-1-3 group they each save 1 pesos a day, which is collected by an elected collector. The group members each pay a 1 pesos membership fee to COW to register their group. At the end of the month the sum is submitted to the COW office. COW matches the amount deposited monthly up to a total of 5000 pesos. In the first month, members decide among themselves which one may take a loan from the total (which is given in the form of a cheque from the COW office). The borrower pays 18 percent interest a year or 15 percent a month and a service fee of three pesos for every 100 pesos borrowed. (The 18 percent interest is broken down as follows: eight percent of the interest goes to COW administration, 9 percent goes to the members and one percent goes to the Social Concern fund.) This program has according to Sr. Myrna eliminated the usurious practice of the "5/6" borrowing scheme (which is a high interest money-lending scheme also referred to as "Boombay" because in some areas Indian people, supposedly originally from Bombay have been the primary lenders. They charge .6 percent interest a day. One fifth of the principle has to be paid in addition to the borrowed sum. This high interest has put many borrowers into an endless cycle of debt). Through these 7-1-3 savings groups some members have been able to establish small businesses such as buy and sell, sewing, or sari-sari stores, although the NGO does not provide any small business training. With a few exceptions, the success of these enterprises was unreported by the interviewee.

Many of the NGO workers interviewed express the dilemmas faced when attempting to address the concerns of returnees and it appears their philosophies, goals, and strategies vary widely as do their outcomes. One of the main dilemmas they grapple with is how to assist ODWs to reintegrate economically. As nearly all of the NGO interviewees stated in the above section, the livelihood projects/ income generating activities are often not successful in the long term so that returnees are no better off economically (and perhaps worse off) than they were before they went overseas and/or when they first returned. Yet, despite their doubt that the Philippine economy can sustain these livelihood projects, many are willing to continue to push on with this short-term assistance.

NGOs operating in the CFP perspective cannot reduce their efforts to offering loans or assistance in establishing *sari-sari* stores because it is not enough to simply tackle the economic conditions of ODWs, their positions in society must also be addressed. Another criticism of focusing only on the income generating is that the approach fails to recognise women's already heavy workload of their double day or triple day responsibilities and the gender inequities that limit women's full empowerment. Medel-Anonuevo (1996: 132), who used to work with CWR (six years as the executive director) declares that through organised action we must confront macro-structures. She particularly stresses that NGOs must "question dominant messages that women are passive or suited to certain roles." Hence through a CFP environment women "must reflect on the whole matter of identity, unpacking those aspects imposed by society and examining how they preserve such imposed identity in themselves as well as in other women." She adds that more importantly, NGOs must "enable women to realise that they have the power to reclaim their authentic identities" (p. 132). Medel-Añonuevo concludes that identity as a fundamental concept will help clarify our vision of a transformed society, a vision that involves on-going creation and re-creation juxtaposing what we imagine and hope for and where we are currently.

Moreover, a CFP environment recognises that the role of the NGO "educator/leader" is vital and both NGO educators/leaders and students must be regarded as equal contributors to the goals and strategies of the organisation. One of the participants, Ta Ta, provides this example of a vertical approach taken by a religious NGO, which assists returning migrant workers through a co-operative.

> *A co-operative should mean unity between [everyone]. We must plan together. But in the end the decisions were made by the Sister. The members could do nothing! Sister said her name is worth one million pesos and ours is worth one peso only. I marketed for all the business of this co-op. I did it all through my own efforts but Sister said I had done nothing! I was disgusted! So after one year of operation, I quit. There is corruption even in the religious organisations.*

As McKay and Romm (1992) warn, the educator who assumes that the "students" have a false consciousness and that s/he, the "educator/leader" knows what is good for them without previously consulting them puts the educator in a position of authority and adopts a vertical approach. Related to the issue of identity, which Medel-Anonuevo (1996) refers to the notion of power must be addressed. For example, one must be cognisant of the power educators/leaders have, as well as the structural bases and manifestations of power. Ta Ta's experience with this particular project underscores the need for NGOs to achieve and maintain equity within the organisation, its projects and programmes, which requires that all members including the NGO workers/educators/leaders openly engage in discussions about the particular forms of social action that will be taken. Walters (1996) reminds us that the meaning of social activism for feminist pedagogy clearly will be shaped by the specific context within which it is operating and also that learners participate as individuals. Hence, in both formal and informal settings, "social activism … will be limited in most cases to the development of critical consciousness among the individuals and in their individual interpretations of what they have experienced" (p. 33). Therefore, the curriculum must include space for detailed planning and strategizing for personal, organisational and broader collective action for social change.

Walters (1996) also alerts us to the importance of acknowledging the difference and commonalities of all involved in the NGO and for the educator to be able to build solidarity. In a situation such as the one Ta Ta described differences were not acknowledged and a process for setting up the program did not inspire confidence in all those involved. Ellsworth (1989) warns that with the absence of a respectful approach, dialogue across difference is not possible. As elaborated later, the role of NGOs in educating for transformation faces challenges and complexities.

The next section discusses the participants' reintegration at the personal level (which in many ways overlaps with the above two sections on reintegration at the family level and reintegration at the economic level). The participants elaborate on the changes they see in themselves since returning from their ODW jobs and the ways in which their participation in NGOs in particular, but also GOs and others have impacted on their personal transformations.

## Reintegration at the personal level

### (a). Identity

In chapter six we read how the participants experienced a rethinking of their identity as a result of their treatment as ODWs by their employers, employers' families, and by members of the receiving societies at large. The post-ODW stage triggers a rethinking of identity again. For some of the participants this rethinking included a development of an inner confidence of oneself and a sense of an inner peace (or at least a greater sense of satisfaction with one's lot). With this re-negotiation of identity came a sense of purpose, a sense of responsibility to helping others. For others their rethinking included a confirmation of being a hapless victim in the home society (as well as in the host society) or as a woman who may become empowered if the circumstances were right.

These changes are what Mezirow (1997) calls changes in a "frame of reference" – the process is transformative learning (TL) (p. 5). Mezirow reminds us that this process requires that learners are "critically reflective of the assumptions, underlying intentions, values, beliefs, and feelings" (p. 6). Below the participants explain how this process unfolded for them.

### (b). Keeping the Silence

According to several of the participants, there is a perception among their family-household members that as overseas domestic work is an extension of their 'natural' 'gentle' female roles performed within the private sphere, the migrant women (and their chastity) will be protected from dangers and temptations. NGO workers quoted above also suggest that family-household members assume, or perhaps only wish to presume that their women who are working as entertainers overseas are strictly performing folk dances, playing instruments, or singing in respectable premises. Although most of the participants, and many other returnees, can attest that the OCW's life abroad is not safeguarded, as (potential) dangers reside within the private domain of the employers' households, most returning ODWs and entertainers are reluctant to correct their families' and communities' misperceptions about what their lives overseas were actually like. These participants explain why:

> Marcie: *My friends [other ODWs in Saudi Arabia] who had problems ... talked to me about their problems. I advised them to send a letter to their husbands to tell them what is happening but they are afraid because they are ashamed. They want their families to believe everything is OK.*
>
> Tonnette: *When I have problems I don't tell my husband. I only talked to a friend [a fellow OCW] because [she] understands the situation.*
>
> Delia: *[People] say wow [when they hear I have worked abroad]... they do not know what life we had [overseas]. No one talks about it.*
>
> Roe: *[When we are working overseas] we cannot go home, [so] if we talk about our problems to our families maybe our families will want us to come back home.*
>
> Val: *It is not good to worry your family, like your mother if she is old it's not good for her to worry [if you tell her your difficulties], [instead] I talk to the Lord.*

Teri was able to write occasional letters to her family, but did not express the truth of her situation explaining, "There was nothing I could do [to change the situation] and there is nothing they could do, so I didn't tell them how it was."

Mia was not close to her parents at the time she left to go to Singapore. She had been living independently of them for six years. She was the only participant who eventually revealed everything about her experiences to her parents after returning to the Philippines.

> *I didn't tell them anything. They didn't even know I went to Singapore. I didn't want them to know what it was like for me in Singapore. They didn't have any money to help me anyway. But now my parents know everything that happened to me. I told them everything that happened.*

These participants' ODWs silences (overseas and after returning) about the negative aspects of their jobs were to protect their reputation and their pride as the good daughter/wife/mother, and/or to avoid worrying their family-household members. These societal misperceptions combined with the romanticising of emigration and the migrants' value systems paves the way for a steady stream of willing migrants who go with their family-households' blessings.

Freire (1981) refers to a "culture of silence" which is what the women had described particularly at the during ODW stage but for some participants it had carried over into the post-ODW stage. Participants explain that they would not/could not talk to their families or others about the details of the experiences they had for fear of causing their family members worry, to become pitying, fearful, angry or ashamed (for themselves or for the women).

### (c). Breaking the silence

For Mia, Bella, Teri, Tessy, Cher, and Tonnette this 'culture of silence' was broken when they joined NGOs, GOs, or had opportunities to dialogue with other returning ODWs or OCWs. For these participants informal discussions were the beginning steps to widening the circle and eventually joining an NGO. This first step provided them a relatively safe place to share their thoughts and feelings one on one (with non-family-household members) and through these discussions they became aware that others had similar problems and found out through broadening informal networks that there were organisations which helped women like themselves.

Mia explains that in her efforts to help a Filipino ODW imprisoned in Singapore she first received help from neighbours "My neighbours supported me. They gave me advice." When she then appeared on national television asking for help an NGO contacted her and a worker came to help "get the ball rolling" (e.g. began legal action). Eventually once the trial and execution of her friend was over Mia continued her involvement with the NGO and became a full-time staff member.

Bella clarifies that she initially became involved because she knew the executive director of a migrant women's NGO. "She was my supervisor before at International Parents Plan and she talked to me about [migrant issues] and encouraged me to begin organising." Through informal conversations with her friend and by observing other women returnees in her village who were suffering from a range of problems from unemployment to "psychiatric problems" she recognised the need to become involved in a bigger way. She declares, "Remember that here in the village you are a loser if you are alone but if you are in groups you can be stronger to fight for the rights of the abused migrant workers and you can ask for help from agencies through your association."

A friend in Tessy's village, who is a returnee now involved in an NGO for migrant women came to talk to Tessy about her experiences abroad. She then asked Tessy to come to the NGO for seminars that were being offered and then Tessy was asked to "testify". She elaborates, "Kanlungan asked me testify for other OCWs - the overseas workers. I shared my experiences with Kanlungan and the women who went and returned. So as a group we can fight together. Women are the ones who go abroad and they have so many problems." Tessy is now a member of that NGO.

Like Tessy, participants Teri, Cher, Tonnette, and Dawn had friends who talked to them informally about their ODW experiences and then encouraged them to attend seminars or workshops at the NGOs. Of these participants only Cher has never attended the seminars and workshops. However, both she and Teri are being helped by the NGOs with important legal matters, which reinforced their belief in "strength in numbers" and the need for NGOs to take action because "no one else will for [us]" (Cher).

Three participants who have not become involved in NGOs are Val, Roe, and Delia. Val is only indirectly involved in an NGO as she stays at its shelter - the Scalabrini Center for People on the Move (SCPM) in Manila. At this shelter where she stays in between ODW jobs Val declares that she has become more aware of migrant issues and has met many migrant workers. At the shelter Val has become good friends with a number of migrants and they talk frequently about their experiences. Although the shelter offers programs such as counselling Val has never participated. Roe states that she has not had time or reason to visit any NGOs or OWWA since returning and Delia declares that she has no interest in becoming involved in any organisation.

### (d). Personal transformation and the role of NGOs, GOs and others

In addition to the help that NGOs (as well as other organisations and individuals) provided for assisting women a space/place to speak about their experiences nine of the 12 participants explain other ways NGOs, GOs and others helped them.

Several participants explain that since returning they (or their families) have observed changes in themselves. These changes include becoming more religious, more materialistic, or less materialistic, more confident (increased self-esteem), more empathetic and determined to work with others to make changes for returning ODWs and Filipino women in general.

#### *(i). Becoming more religious*

Val, Bella and Ta Ta emphasise their renewal in their faith. Val declares that due to her ODW experiences her faith (she defines her religion as "Protestant, Christian") has deepened despite the fact that she could not attend church in either of her two ODW jobs. Due to her difficult work experiences her "trust in the Lord" was strengthened and reaffirmed. She elucidates:

> *When you go [overseas] you become mature, especially spiritually. Because you'll be closer to the Lord if you will be out, when you are overseas. Because no body can find what is in your heart. Only the Lord knows. To the glory of God I survive the trials [of the ODW experiences]. I learned that if you give to the Lord and behold the prophesies you will survive because God is good.*

She adds that her desire to fulfil her dream, which has always been "to share God's blessings", has grown even stronger since her ODW experiences and her time spent at the migrant workers' shelter in Manila. Her drive to do this has required that she change her whole persona and her way of interacting with people. She is more interested now in engaging people in dialogue even though she knows there may be disagreements and arguments – something she always avoided in the past. She explains:

> *I changed a lot since I went overseas. [Firstly,] before I was not a Christian. I was not Christ like. [Secondly,] I am becoming bold now. What makes me bold is when I say something like about my God, when I want to share my God. If I want to share I will share. I am inviting [anyone] to praise God, but sometimes you cannot avoid [disagreements]. Sometimes I invite [others] but sometimes we argue but even when we are arguing we are changing ideas and I like that. Sometimes I say, 'Oh, I see'. I cannot suppress my personality [even though] they are still not like me and keeping a living God. Before I wouldn't like to do like that [argue]. They [others that I talk to] are talking about what is my life. I pray that I am an example to them. I am just praying that if God will make me a channel to them I can help them find Him.*

She gives another example of how she asserted herself at the shelter where she is living at the moment:

> *I know I am bolder now because there are rules here at [migrant workers' shelter] that we should follow. Well, in the daytime as long as you log your name in the logbook you can go [wherever you want]. But at night we have a 10:00 p.m. curfew. [But] we wanted to go to rally, a prayer rally in San Pablo last night. So I shared with Father [Catholic priest in charge of shelter] my issue because I told Father we are all praying for one God. [I said] "Permit us Father to go for this is once in our life." He told me, "OK". So he permitted us to go!*

Like Val, Bella felt that her ODW experience and her weekly association with a church in Hong Kong on her day off contributed to her religiosity, which altered her whole lifestyle and way of dealing with people, especially with her children.

> *I converted to a Born-again Christian in Hong Kong and [since then] I have changed a lot. Now I do not shout at my children only sometimes when they are hard-headed and I am more patient. I am less selfish and more giving. Even if I have no money [or if] I have one peso in my wallet, I will give it to the Lord.*

Ta Ta also changed her 'outlook on life' and became more 'a more positive thinking person' as a result of her experiences abroad, by attending seminars and workshops offered by GOs and NGOs, and becoming more religious. She explains:

> *[Since returning from overseas] I changed the way I deal with people. Before, I was ashamed. I had self-pity. I was depressed and I blamed God. [I thought,] I am a good woman, why did this happen to me? But I attended a lot of seminars [since returning] including religious ones. Now I am more religious. My faith is stronger. And I am a more positive thinking person. You know before I hated sewing. Now I enjoy it. I work joyfully. I say, 'After I finish this bag I will have rice for my children'. I tell others, "Do not put discouragement into your mind! You can do anything! If you will learn to do it and do it!" My advice to women is wake up! Join a woman's group. A jolly woman's group.*

*(ii). Greater confidence/Increased self-esteem*

Marcie feels that she has "evolved" since her ODW job. This evolution has resulted in a more confident, active, happier person. When asked if she had changed much since she worked overseas Marcie states: "Having travelled I am more confident. Yes, really I am much more confident." This confidence extends to a new self-assurance in her appearance. She explains, "[When I was younger] I wanted to be an actor but I 'had no face'. Now I am not so different [in appearance but] I don't mind how I look." She declares she now has a feeling of "being at home" in her body "even though" she says, "I really gained weight [in Saudi Arabia]. My husband said I am not heavy but I look fat." This confidence/increased self-esteem has enabled her to do cultural interpretative dance on stage in public as an adult. "I learned to be a dancer when I was small. I am a quick learner. I watch on TV and then I learn. I do interpretative dance and cultural dance as a tribal person. I did this dance for our church activity [recently]." She declares that her greater confidence, along with time management skills learned in her ODW job, has contributed to her willingness and ability to move into her business and leadership and political roles in her community.

About her business she says,

> *It was my idea to build this* candrina. *I had a little money and I bought the building materials for its construction and I borrowed money from my friend too, a small loan. I am not yet finished paying her back. This business is good. There are others near here but I have regular customers. I am known [in the community] through this [business] and from the church.*

Regarding her community leadership roles she declares, "Now I am the president of community in the Parish sector and one of the *Barangay* councillors". As *Barangay* councillor, she plans to make changes in her community such as ridding the neighbourhood of drug addicts and bringing peace to the neighbourhood. In fact she proclaims, "Really, my hope for the future of all the Philippines is that there will be peace everywhere and no more drug addicts anywhere. There are so many groups in the dark on the way home from church. I think they are doing drugs."

Val speaks of a positive change in her perception of her body, which she states was partly a result of losing weight when she was working in Taiwan and partly because she has come to understand that God gave her this body type for which she should be thankful. Her weight change caused her to rethink her prior "body consciousness" and concern about looking slim to attract a potential husband:

> *I am not body conscious anymore. Whatever God gives you be thankful. So I am telling to my friends if a man really loves you he does not care about your physical appearance. He must love what is on the inside. So they are laughing. [Laughs]. Because [in Taiwan] I am not eating so much because the food was not very good and before [I went to Taiwan] I was always dieting. I could not control my weight so I was very happy I was 57 [kilos when I returned], before I was 68 kilos. But now I am becoming fat again. Well, I am thankful to the Lord for my body if it's fat or not. I told them [my friends] I am just not body conscious!*

Ta Ta declares that through her ODW experiences, which have shown her that she is capable of overcoming barriers and difficulties, she has developed an even stronger sense of self-confidence.

> *Even though I do not have my college [education] I can manage. I can talk to anyone. I tell [my friend – a returning ODW who is depressed], "You have the hands, the eyes, you are complete! You are not blind, you can do anything. If you are depressed, just look at all the beggars around you." That's my attitude. When you are angry sometimes you cannot help but blame yourself. When I am thinking like that I go downtown here and look at the beggars. They have no hands, how do they do it? I have everything. I have the personality. I have the knowledge that I should have. I should use this. I should not be depressed. I told her, ' I could have lost my children but to this day I have my children with me and that is a lesson.' After she smiles but then she comes back to me again. [I say] "Oh, [friend's name], I used to blame God for everything, but now? I am still suffering but not as I suffered before. I can do easily everything... For me physically I can work. I have several friends that have cancer, everything, heart failure, hypertension, [but] me? I have nothing. My doctor said I am leading a risky life. But you know you can save your ways through the healthy way. I eat a lot of fish, vegetables and fruits and I do not drink soft drinks. Great things will happen I tell my friend. All my friends say it is unbelievable how I have overcome everything.*

### *(iii). On Materialism*

Given that the ODW experience occurs in social and economic contexts reflecting greater affluence than the ODWs have experienced in the Philippines, it was interesting to explore whether and how the ODW experiences may have shaped the ODWs views on materialism.

The responses of two of the ODWs, Bella and Delia reflect alternative views and suggest a range of possible responses. For example, Bella explains that since returning she has changed her lifestyle, mainly by being more spend-thrifty and less materialistic, which she attributes to a new perspective on life (as she stated above this new perspective is partially due to becoming a born-again Christian) and also because of necessity.

> *Since I went to Hong Kong I changed a lot. In lifestyle, before I went I was buying more things that were not necessary. In my own [way of] dress[ing] I have changed. I never buy new dresses. I prefer the old ones now. I used to buy a new one for every Christmas, for each occasion as a way of consoling myself [and] because I know next month I will earn another salary when I was working at the hospital. Now I have to budget my money. Like this dress. I do not want to buy any news ones. [Laughs]. I don't need consoling through new things. I buy things for my kids when the things are on sale. I have learned how to budget and I changed my lifestyle. If you are materialistic you will never be satisfied.*

On the other hand, after her return, Delia says people have expressed admiration (albeit she says, "from the mouth not from the heart") of her mainly because of the impression that she must be wealthy due to her many years of working overseas. In addition, her family members have been appreciative of the many ways she had helped them with her remittances. In a sense then the reflection of herself through the eyes of others has reinforced her positive self-image as a successful returning ODW. She also declares that she now owns "a piece of land in the province" which gives her a sense of security, and it is a reminder of her financial success. Delia admits she enjoys her increased status and ability to be "free" with her money:

> *Since I came back my family says I am different. I still dress the same. I still speak the same. But they say I am different in my lifestyle. Well, yes I have changed my lifestyle, especially in the way of spending money. I have problems saving. I do not know where to put my money. I like to spend it.*

*(iv). More empathetic and determined to work with others to make changes for returning ODWs and Filipino women in general*

Mia provides an example of the ways in which she her experiences abroad and consequent interactions following her return, dramatically changed her life course. She pinpoints a meeting and an ensuing friendship developed whilst in prison in Singapore that had the most profound influence on her transformative learning experience, which led to her desire to help others through her NGO work. Before meeting her new friend Mia was suicidal and feeling hopeless. "I thought I would be in [the Singaporean] prison forever." She recalls in detail her first meeting:

> *I tried to commit suicide by strangling myself with my bra. The guards put handcuffs on me and put me in hospital. There I met Mama Flor [Flor Contemplacian]. I [had] already heard the story of Mama Flor. The prison guards and the inmates were afraid of her. She was hand-cuffed at night. She said, "Murder is my case. Are you scared of me?" I said, "No".*

She elaborates on how they began to trust and help each other:

> *They [the guards] said I was crazy and handcuffed me to the bed. Mama Flor helped me in the daytime. She would change my nappie [adult diaper]. I only had the handcuffs removed when I bathed or ate. There were eight beds in this room with two people in each bed. After two months they sent me back to my cell. But after nine months I wanted to pretend I would kill myself again to get to the hospital so I cut my wrist with the toothpaste tube. For one month I was staying in the prison hospital, handcuffed. I stayed again with Mama Flor. She said she does not trust any Filipinos anymore. They are all liars. But little by little we began to trust each other. She told me her whole story.*
>
> *She did not kill Delia Maga, who was her friend. Delia was going back to the Philippines and Flor wanted her to take some things back for her. The boy was epileptic. He was taking a bath and he drowned in the water. The boy was dead, so Delia immediately called the employer. The employer came and saw his son was dead and kicked Delia Maga. He was very upset. He is a martial arts expert. He punched Delia in the face. Flor said she was like stuck with glue to the floor as she watched the employer take a string from the stroller and tied it around Delia's neck so tight, her tongue came out. Mr. Wong told Flor not to go. He called the police and reported the case. He then said Flor could go home. Half an hour later the police came to Flor's house and arrested her and brought her to the police station to give her statement. The police said, "You killed Delia Maga and the boy." She said the accusation is not true. They interrogated her all day and all night. They took her to a clinic and tied her up. They put wires on her head and arms... after that she did not know anything. But the following day, she saw she had signed a confession. She had only a grade 4 education. How could she read this confession? She could speak English very well though.*
>
> *The Philippines Embassy [staff] told her, "Admit you are guilty and after 5 years you will be free." Flor trusted this woman because she was Filipino. She was then locked up and given electric shocks and had her head dunked in water. She was very very tired. Her body and her mind were tired and beaten. So she admitted. The CIA (Centre Intelligence Agency) sent her to Changi Prison. During her last month before the court hearing she was given medicine. She always took this medicine*

> *before going to court. When she took this medicine she did not recognise me. She did not eat or sleep. The next day she would vomit and later she would recognise me.*

With a last plea from her friend ringing in her ears Mia left prison and Singapore. Her sense of loyalty to her friend, her desire to help her friend who Mia believed beyond a shadow of a doubt was innocent pushed Mia to take on a different persona when she returned home. In order to fulfil her promise to Flor, she was forced to step out of her shell and put aside her shyness to meet people she had never met before, make appearances on national television and even meet with the President of the Philippines at Malacañang. Mia explains:

> *[Mama Flor said,] "Singapore is a police state. I do not think I will be acquitted. Ask the president to help me. I am innocent. Our government is the only one to help me." So [when I returned to the Philippines] I went to her family. I met her daughter and her son, her husband and her in-laws. I went to the TV station with her family. We went to ABSCBN, Channel Two [to talk about Flor's story]. Then I met the president [Ramos] personally. I talked to him and then he called Singapore. They [authorities in Singapore] said after four years she can appeal. So we all felt OK because we believed she had a chance to be acquitted.*

Mia's sense of relief turned to fear and guilt when she heard Flor's sentence:

> *After one month, on Channel Two, I heard Mama Flor is going to be executed. I was shocked. She was supposed to have four years and now they said she only has 1 month. I felt guilty. [I thought] Where do I go? Who can help me?*

She explains that with the help and support of others (mainly her neighbour, a reporter, and an NGO worker) she agreed to put herself in the spotlight again and even take what she believed was a risk of life in the last ditched effort to save her friend:

> *My neighbours supported me. They said I could testify at the trial. On March 13, NBI (National Bureau of Investigation) was closed, but my neighbour has a friend at Channel 7. A reporter came to my house and interviewed me. I told the story and said, "I need help". And [an NGO worker] saw me on TV. They contacted me. The reporter, an NGO staff member, and an attorney from PILC (Public Interest Law Centre in the Philippines) came to my house at 6:30 p.m. The attorney asked if I would testify but you know, the employer of Delia Magda [the ODW who was also murdered along with the boy] is rich. He is a military officer. He has connections and is very powerful. I was very scared. [I thought if I go to testify] maybe he will kill me in Singapore. But I agreed to do it. One lawyer took my statement and sent it to Singapore government. They faxed my statement to the Prime Minister but he said it was too late!*

> *On the 16th in the evening I went [with media personnel, reporters and lawyers] from the Philippines to Singapore. I arrived at 1 p.m. I went first to the hotel then to the police station.*
>
> *At 6:00 a.m. March 17, Mama Flor was executed. The Singapore government denied my statement. The Changi prison has a siren. It goes louder and louder and does not stop until the person is dead. We heard the siren [and] saw many police dogs, cars, and officers carrying guns. All because of Flor. Until 8 a.m. we stayed outside the prison. The media, the reporter, the lawyers and me. I cried and cried. She had died already but we still did not know for sure. My lawyer said, "We will go to the hotel and talk about what to do next." Then I [began to] feel hopeful, happy and alive. We knew that it was [President] Ramos' birthday, so we thought maybe he called Singapore and asked them to stop the execution. We did not know if she was dead or not. We did not know she was dead but in the Philippines everyone knew she was dead because the Singapore government called the Philippines and told [Filipinos] the news. Then ABS-CBN's newscaster [Loren Lagarda] called us and told us Mama Flor had died already.*
>
> *The reporters saw the body of Mama Flor on a stretcher. They took photos of it. We brought the body back with us. There were so many people there [at the airport] when we arrived.*

Mia speaks of her sense of responsibility to her friend and her feeling of inadequacy (to help Flor) and of her great sense of guilt. "I felt so guilty because I could not help her." However, by working through these feelings with the support of NGO workers Mia began to understand more about herself and more about what she could do to help others. She believes her life took on a different meaning, which is just as Neuman (1996) affirms when he states that exploring feelings in depth leads to greater self-awareness and initiates changes in meaning structures. Her sense of guilt still weighs on her shoulders but she declares, "For a few years at [NGO name] they advised me, 'You do not have to feel guilty'. Little by little I began to feel better [but] I still feel guilty. I wish I could have saved her life."

After Flor's execution and Mia's return to the Philippines Mia got a job in a clothing boutique and also met a man with whom she had a baby. She did not remain in a relationship with the man for long and during her pregnancy she quit her job. As an unemployed single mother still disassociated from her family she was feeling frustrated because her goal/desire to help others which was initially a way of coping with her emotions of guilt and sadness decided to work full time at the above mentioned NGO (where she is still employed). It is in this role of NGO worker that Mia attributes further significant transformational learning/ personal growth. Mia states that in addition to her job, the NGO provided her with other things, "Here at [this NGO], my sisters respect me. They give me moral support. I got confidence in myself. As a young girl I had no confidence. I had no friends." She reiterates these important aspects when she explains how her previous work experiences did nothing to bring her a sense of self-worth, which she mainly believes is because they were disrespected low-waged labour jobs:

> *My work experience has never been very happy for me, not the first job [as domestic helper], or the second or any job... but now I am very happy. I learned so many things, especially about my rights as a woman. I became very strong, more strong. Now I am happy. I have a place and a [duty] at [NGO name]. Before I had not many friends and I did not have self-esteem. I have friends now. I have confidence. I had not much hope when I was in Singapore. I have hope now. I am helping people, women, migrant workers, and peasants in the countryside.*

*(v). Working with others in NGOs to make societal changes*

As stated above, Mia's involvement in an NGO has played an important role in her life since returning to the Philippines. Through the NGO she was able to find a way to help her friend, she was given support and assistance in coming to terms with her experiences and she was provided employment which is both rewarding and satisfying despite not being a salaried job. She adds, "I joined this NGO because of my experiences and because of the [lack of] government [support] for OCWs." Through this NGO Mia has learned very useful practical skills, which helped her to do her NGO job better and gave her a sense of confidence and purpose.

> *Now I am on the staff at [NGO name]. I work for the Violence against women and with cultural groups and on the committee for overseas workers. Since I came to [NGO name] I have had a lot of training. Every staff [member] must go through a three-month integration in each sector so from these I learned more. I took a course in para-counselling training for three weeks, acupuncture training for two weeks, therapeutic massage for four days and first aid for three weeks, which is needed for our quick reaction in picket lines or at rallies. I need to know these skills for the medical mission we give to peasants in communities. All this nonformal education is for my work here at [NGO name].*

She elaborates on what she, through the NGO, is doing to address problems many women face in migration and to improve the situation for Filipino women in general:

> *I want to help other OCWs to organise, to give education so that they know their rights when they go abroad. So that is why I volunteered at the Commission on Overseas Filipinas. I tell other women about my experiences and about violence against women. I organise women, not only OCWs but the urban poor. But it is so hard to organise OCWs. We contact them [the returnees] through Migrante [another NGO]. We get their telephone numbers and addresses and we invite them to our activities. We tell them about the benefits from the government [agencies]. They do not know of these benefits, especially those that are in the provinces. They need to know where to go for help. But we [at this NGO] do not offer pre-departure seminars. Those that are planning to go abroad again, we give them this information. We tell them all countries are dangerous. Domestic workers other OCWs, like the entertainers all need the same kind of education, information. Even the families we give education if they contact us. If there is an OCW in a dangerous situation, we tell them what they can do. We help them go to the government agencies, which can help. We get them assistance and follow-up. We rally, picket, campaign and advocate so that the public will be aware, like in the case of Sarah Balabagan and Flor. Sarah was lucky. She should thank Flor for raising the awareness all over the world before [Sarah's] case came up. We pressure the government to act. Only with pressure they will act. We discuss the R.A. 8042. We conduct these information seminars in groups or to individuals. We also provide counselling to OCWs, those women that have been trafficked, white slavery. If they need doctors we refer them and to lawyers too. It is free to them because there are volunteer lawyers and volunteer doctors working for [this NGO]. We share experiences too. So we can learn from each other. Everyone is usually willing to share. There is no problem.*

Other participants are involved in NGOs but have not undertaken a personal commitment in the same way that Mia has done. However, their involvement has been meaningful to them in many ways. Dawn, for example, has participated in seminars at an NGO and seminars sponsored by OWWA. She explains what she has learned and her opinion about these.

> *Many of us [returnees in this village] took a seminar on the violations against women and about gender sensitivity. The DSWD (Department of Social Welfare and Development) co-ordinated it. Kanlungan refunded our travel fare [as we had to travel to a nearby city]. It was very useful for me. It taught me my rights as a woman, not to always to say, "Yes, yes, yes" to the husband but you know where you stand and you can fight for your rights within the family and community. We also took hog-raising seminars. The government offered these. That is good if you can find a way to do this [income generating]. If more seminars are offered I would go because it gives us information and more ideas.*

Tonnette learned about an NGO (Kanlungan) from her friend. She has attended seminars there and found the information "nice" and "valuable". She elaborates:

> *Many times I went there. I learned about women's rights, women against violence, abuse and other violations. That [knowledge] helps women [here and] when you are overseas.*

Teri feels she has an obligation to help a fellow ODW whom she met in Singapore so she got in touch with an NGO located in the nearest town. While at the NGO office Teri learned of seminars that were offered and since she is "interested in learning more" she began attending:

> *I attended the seminars at Kanlungan, many seminars. I learned about women's issues, their rights and migrant workers' abuse and why so many women are migrating [from the Philippines].*

Through her own ODW experiences combined with the seminars, which situated female migration in social, economic and political contexts she feels she has a very good understanding of the problems migrant women face. She has a sense of wanting "to help others".

Bella also has a burning desire to help other returning ODWs, which she is attempting to do through the establishment of a new NGO in her village. From her observations of her neighbours, many of whom are or have been ODWs or have family members who are ODWs, as well as through her own experiences abroad and her involvement in an NGO Bella feels she is well able to articulate the problems returning ODWs face.

> *I know that [employers] are stamping on us abroad. We have four psychiatric cases here [in this community] after they suffered abuse overseas. I try to help them. I treat them like they are normal and we see a difference in them now. Also many ODWs have no money when they return. These are some of the needs we must address.*

She then explains how she intends to do this through an NGO she is organising:

> *Although Kanlungan [in San Fernando] is helping them we will help them also here in our community. So we are trying to uplift the economic condition of all returnees, because we are trying to stand up again though we stumbled before. I am managing the establishment of this project. And it looks hopeful. The mayor will accredit it and we will get the financial support from the Department of Health [(DOH)]. We got a*

> *loan of 58,000 pesos from the Department of Health with the help of Kanlungan in San Fernando. We will get counselling for the psychiatric cases. We have 32 members, including the families of OCWs who are away. When [OCWs] come back here they are planning already to go overseas again so in this organisation we want to share with the members dress making to sew our own clothes, handicrafts like soft broom making, and baskets. We want to have trainers come to teach us new skills even though trainers charge a fee. We want to make Obee jam. Obee is a yam. We do not know how to process it to sell so we need a trainer to show us how to make this jam. And peanuts, we have lots here. We could have technical assistance to show us how to make peanut butter. We have many dreams but no money. Maybe all this will happen later.*

Bella also spoke of the need to have a money-lending scheme for the members:

> *And we will each contribute money ourselves so we will make some money. A hundred pesos is our operating expenses. And we agreed that each member will pay 10 pesos for administration and 20 pesos per person for the monthly contribution for capital build-up. That is 20 pesos times 32. Then if the members want a loan we'll give them one instead of them going to the "Boombay". They are the Indians lending money at high interest. For example [OCW returnees] are selling delicacies at the school and they needed capital so they get 1000 pesos from "Boombay". This they will pay back with another 200 pesos interest in 30 days. We call this "Five Six". So to stop our members from borrowing from "Boombay" we will collect only a small amount of pesos for capital build-up. Members can borrow and they have 45 days at two percent interest and after 45 days, if they cannot pay, the interest becomes five percent.*

Ta Ta's interest and enthusiasm for getting involved in NGO activities, which would be of benefit to herself and other returning migrant workers has led to her participation in a number of NGO income generating projects as well as establishing her own NGO. She describes her new NGO:

> *There are 15 people in our group. There are four women and the rest are men. All of them are returnees from [other Asian countries]. We are called TOWER: T— [name of community deleted] Overseas Workers Economic Re-integration. We have noticed that the skilled and non-skilled, professional or non-professionals, when they arrive home from abroad, they cannot have a job in the Philippines, ... they cannot be accommodated [in the labour market]. Most of them, after so many months, a year or 6 months, cannot land a job here, so most of us are jobless. So we are trying to find a way to help the members and [some of the members'] wives find a way for an alternative livelihood. We spread information and advocate for migrant workers. We have not yet talked to government officials, but to get all the funds we need, all of us have to now.*
>
> *We have to register at the co-operative development authority and after that I will write a politician for help for our situation. I will inform them of the need for help*

> *for OCWs. I will be the one to add spice to the letter so the politicians can really find the heart to help us. Later on we will be having credit also because there are humanitarian reasons why each member will need assistance. Emergency situations may occur. So we need another set [of monies] for emergency and another set for credit and livelihood.*

Ta Ta expresses one of her frustrations with the new organisation, which is demanding more time and effort of her than of the other members:

> *As of now we are only temporary officials and the secretary was not doing his job. It was the same one presiding over the meeting and the one jotting down the minutes. Oh my goodness! So, before registration we will have elections because the other officials cannot perform their jobs. Two of them can't. I am doing everything!*
> *I will prepare the by-laws, articles of co-operation, and [calculate] how much each our share will be because as of now as one group not as an individual we have 30,000 pesos. Each of us got a loan of 2000 pesos. It is complicated but I have the background, the experience.*

As indicated above, NGOs' roles in development vary as they operate within a wide range of paradigms. Some NGOs take a conservative stance that to a large degree reproduces the current social order by adapting people to the *status quo* (such as the church-based NGOs like COW and ECMI), others are liberal (focussing on individual change and perhaps reforming some elements of the social order while leaving the basic structure unchanged) and still others are radical/transformative/critical (finding ways of challenging and changing the social order and transforming individuals) (such as Migrante, Gabriela, Kanlungan, Kakammpi, CWR). Critical feminist pedagogy operates from the assumption that the *status quo* must change (Walters, 1996). As stated above, an NGO with a CFP philosophy focuses on the process of empowerment aimed specifically at transforming existing social relations, those disempowered on the basis of race, class and gender.

Seven of the participants in the study (mainly Ta Ta, Mia, Tonnette, Teri, Dawn, Bella, Tessy) who were involved in NGOs in the post-ODW stage (specifically Kanlungan, Unlad Kabayan, and Gabriela ) feel they have developed a better understanding of their rights, the law, the economy, politics and generally what globalisation means to them as migrants. The participants explain that through a process of dialogue, sharing stories and experiences with their "groups/organisations/associations/co-OCWs", they have been able to reinterpret their needs and the needs of their families and communities in terms of rights. In unity, they have discussed and devised ways of having their needs and rights addressed with political, social and economic short-term and/or long-term goals in mind.

In her narrative, Mia illustrates her engagement in the critical pedagogical processes that challenge hegemony of previously unquestioned givens in their life conditions. She says that through this process she has gained a better and more holistic understanding of migration in the Philippine context and explains some of the social, political and economic complexities of migration and the interrelationship of national developmental issues and migration:

> *As long as the government remains semi-feudal, semi-colonial, things will not be better for women in the Philippines.*

When asked her what changes are necessary, she replied:

> *There has to be agrarian reform for peasants and national industrialisation for workers and equal treatment for women and men, no discrimination, and equal pay... Maybe it is the government's fault [women have to migrate] because if [government] provides education for the poor children and the youth, we can find a better job and a better life, but the government did not do anything...*

Participants Ta Ta and Bella are critical of the government for its apparent lack of concern for the welfare and safety of OCWs and its inability to improve and sustain the economy through changing the domestic structure of the economy. This is what Bella and Ta Ta are saying:

> *It is very hard, really, in the Philippines. Because of the attitude of the Philippines we are not improving. That is why we are backward. The government is so corrupt.*
>
> *If the government does not change its corrupt ways nothing will change for all Filipinos, maybe all Filipinos will be out of the country! Yes!*

Ta Ta who is very active in her NGO organising also hopes to gain more political voice for OCWs: "My one goal is to have a seat in the *Barangay* office for all [ODWs] so government will know what we need [in terms of support and services]. Maybe not me necessarily, but one in our group. Someone who is knowledgeable of [migrant] issues."

In addition, as a result of a combination of their involvement in NGOs and their overseas experience, many of the participants have gained confidence in themselves, feel they can express themselves better, speak knowledgeably about migrant and women's issues, and take leadership roles. Several have become political leaders in their *Barangays*, churches, in co-operatives, and NGOs.

## Analysis

The women who have participated in NGOs have indicated that their involvement has proved beneficial to them in many ways. And although their involvement has provided them with a better understanding of migrant women's issues, and for a few (e.g. Bella, Ta Ta), a desire to improve the situation for Filipino migrant women and Filipino women in general, their level of conscientisation, in the CFP sense, is limited. For Mia, however, the NGO was/is a critical factor in her growth as a leader and in the conscientisation process. As Luttrell (1988) points out, charting the development of consciousness is difficult, just as it is for Mia. Particularly, as the process for Mia is not a linear one rather one that is multilayered and includes different factors and changes over time and involves her unique life circumstances. These changes and circumstances include for example, being a domestic helper at age 11, being trafficked as a prostitute, being jailed, befriending and helping Flor Contemplacion, becoming involved with a man, having a child, separating from her partner, working with the NGO, etc. As she expressed above, her participation in the NGO contributed to her confidence and increased awareness of herself as a woman and as a member of the poor working class. Moreover, through reflection and dialogue with other NGO participants she developed her awareness of the ways in which her gender, race and class have influenced various experiences/outcomes in her life and how these intersections form the context for all women's lives as well as for the NGO's political activities.

In this study, it was not feasible to directly observe the specific NGO educational and social experiences of the ODWs. To gain an alternative perspective on the role of NGOs in the lives of ODWs, it was useful therefore to look at a sample of leading NGOs which have focused on ODW issues and problems.

Three migrant NGOs in the Philippines, which I visited and whose directors and workers I interviewed are attempting to apply critical pedagogical approaches to the present circumstances of migrant women workers to understand the root causes of why women migrate, and find ways of challenging the status quo of women's position in society. In these NGOs, migrant domestic workers are challenged to question the previously unquestioned givens, such as: the development programs in their countries which impel them to migrate; the temporary work visas and insecure status they are given in the receiving countries; and the obligation felt by female family members in particular to migrate and remit their salaries to help their families. According to the NGO interviewees posing questions about justice and human rights and considering possibilities for transcending traditionally accepted patterns of oppression provides the optimism and the means for social transformation.

Several of the interviewed NGO workers/directors emphasize the link between feminist theorising and the ODW phenomenon. NGOs such as CWR, Gabriela (a national alliance of women's organisations) and Migrante insist that for society to understand the phenomenon of Filipino out-migration, people need a holistic understanding that includes a grounding in the Philippine's colonial history, societal ideologies, politics and economics presented from a feminist perspective.

Recognised as one of leading militant or radical women's organization in the Philippines, Gabriela focuses on a wide range of issues that affect women, such as landlessness, militarisation, the debt crisis, developmental aid, prostitution and trafficking of women. Underlying their tasks of mobilising and organising women for liberation as well as promoting programs that uplift the conditions of women, Gabriela workers (in support Parreñas' suggestion) insist that ideological norms need to change. As Ms. Obeth states:

> *Part of our culture is the family comes first and women and the eldest of children too are made to feel more responsible for the well-being of the family. It's from the feudal patriarchal system and the church, which have taught women to be in a subordinate position. Women are supposed to be in charge of the house, [children, housework, etc.] while the men are outside working, but because of the economic crisis women are now pushed out to work too. But there are no job opportunities and the condition for women is not good when they sacrifice so much. Only through change will the condition of women be improved. The economic conditions have to*

> *change and then other changes will follow, including cultural changes.* (Personal interview, February 9, 1998)

To promote change, the workers explain that the participants in their workshops and seminars, who come from all classes and backgrounds, are provided with information that ties the migration phenomenon with wider societal, economic and global issues. Here Ms. Obeth explains some of the main points addressed in their workshops with returnees:

> *There are different ways to analyse migration and other situations, but in our analysis we trace migration to government policies like land-use conversion, labour export and the Philippines 2000 program, resulting in contractualisation [for example], which have displaced so many who had few skills so they looked to migration. The economy is backward, it's semi-colonial and semi-feudal and we have no basic industries, only manufacturing but even the garment industry is failing due to international competition. The Filipino OCW is [also] affected by the globalisation of poverty. Some [host] countries are becoming poorer, laying off Filipinos, and hiring even cheaper labour than Filipino [labour]. But the Philippine government is always looking for new markets. [For example], the Philippine government is pushing OCWs to Africa. Yet, [while] the government wants the money from OCWs it is not protecting them through [for example] bilateral agreements. [Furthermore] the government [through the POEA and OWWA] teaches the OCWs [to] "be subservient and submissive or you'll be deported". The government is exploiting this stereotype [of submissiveness] and when times are tough Filipino women are not subservient.*

She briefly explains that the pedagogical strategies they employ ensure that the workshop participants draw on their own experiences, define their needs, strategize for change and keep positive by looking at past successes women have achieved.

> *Through education women learn to stand up and see the situation is not futile. Even in economic crisis women still go on, still fight for their rights, still push for change. Women have made changes over history. To improve we always have to be in a process of change and this change has to be dictated by the women themselves. It has to be based on their needs and situations. This comes through sharing our stories.*

Gertrudes Ranjo-Libang, Director of the Centre for Womens' Resources (CWR) states that through formal workshops and seminars and informally, "We educate grass-roots women and the public about issues pertaining to migration." Her account of what is usually discussed in the formal and informal workshops/seminars is similar to what workers at

Gabriela explained, emphasising the need to challenge workshop participants to critique and question and constantly push for changes:

> *To understand migration and women's position in society, we have to look at the historical roots of women's oppression and ask, "What do we do to change the present situation?" Women are socialised through the family, the church, etc. that they are the ones to ensure the care of the family. They are taught to replicate the image of the soft-spoken subservient refined feminine way of acting. It's related to religion. The Spanish brought religion and accelerated the rise of the feudal relationship in economics, the hacienda system. They brought the man as "head of the family" idea and the whole feudal way of thinking. Although there are [recent] changes to the advantage of women, problems are complicated. The ideas of consumerism and the commodification of women lets parents sell their children into prostitution and send their daughters as OCWs and turn a blind eye to what they do overseas, like prostitution. The government is in denial [about exploitation of women OCWs]. The economic crisis is worsening so the government is even more aggressive about exporting labour and this is detrimental to women's situation. The Philippines [government] is quiet about violations [done against OCWs] because they want to promote overseas labour. The ruling classes don't want to make changes to help women. Why should they change people's way of thinking? Then women will start demanding higher wages. The reserve of labour is [made up of many] women. They want to keep it that way. Bosses can say [to women workers] "lay down or lay off" and the women know that if they are fired there are five other women waiting for their job so women are 'willing' to be exploited sexually and economically just to keep a job. The law like the anti-sexual harassment law and the rape law took decades for women to get passed but these laws were watered down. We have to keep pushing for changes in our thinking and economically.* (Personal interview January 6, 1998)

Her organisation also does research and conducts studies in partnership with other organisations and on its own on topics, which relate to women such as prostitution, labour-contracting, land-use conversion, and sex tourism. Funding, she explains, comes from foreign agencies, NGO grants and support from other sources but not from church groups. The research is used in their workshops/seminars and used by lobby groups and grassroots women's groups.

Migrante-International (Migrante is the Filipino word meaning "migrant", which is often associated with OCWs) is an international alliance of Filipino migrant organisations. The position of the organisation is that "the continued economic and political crisis caused by foreign monopoly control and agarian backwardness in the Philippines are roots of forced migration." The organisation's "means to change and eliminate this socio-economic problems is to arouse, organise, and mobilise the Filipino people in general and the migrant Filipinos in particular for genuine freedom and democracy (APMMF, 1996: 1). Imelda Laguidam, Chairperson of Migrante briefly summarises her organisation's goals:

> *Some of our goals have been to help people set up other groups. We need to organise, raise awareness and empower people. We must fight policies that affect ODWs negatively and improve the working conditions of ODWs. Our goal is not to discourage people from going overseas, but to understand problems in order to provide weapons for fighting for improved change. Migration should be an option, not a forced thing due to unemployment or sub-contracting of labour by companies. We want to educate about what is going on, the reasons for going overseas, the root causes of migration.* (Personal interview, January 12, 1998)

She explains that their way of exploring these issues is through group dialogues with OCWs, raising questions, exploring ways to challenge existing societal structures, and providing participants with relevant research and information.

From the interviews with these three organisations it appears that some of the key themes debated in the literature on CFP, such as the principles of CFP, consciousness-raising, the question of difference, and social activism are reflected in the approaches they are taking. To briefly reiterate these specific themes, CFP is concerned with transforming the position of the oppressed, with a particular focus on improving the position of women. Consciousness-raising relies on experience and feeling as the starting point which leads to the development of powerful sources of politically focused feminist education and action. Investigation of experiences leads to the view of the world that acknowledges differences between women. This means recognising that individual experience is "contingent and situated and, at the same time, turning a critical eye on how our own histories and selves are constructed" (Walters, 1996: 31). And although difference is recognised and validated so is the need to mobilise around common goals. Finally, social activism is assumed in CFP as the need to change the status quo is an important premise.

As I did not observe any of the workshops or seminars taking place in any of the NGOs I cannot directly evaluate further their pedagogical strategies from a CFP standpoint (e.g., how the educator/workshop leader is positioned and the process of dialogue and empowerment). However, it appears obvious to me that some NGOs do not teach from a feminist perspective and their projects and programs are carried out with little or no attempt at consciousness raising, despite their claims of "conscientising" and "gender sensitising". When their goals and pedagogical strategies for educating are viewed critically they seem quite contradictory to a feminist framework. Two interviewees from two church-run NGOs provide examples of how the church, which they believe has special privileges that enables them to reach a large number of Filipinos with their educational programs, hint that their special status also means their "education" can be accepted without question. For example, Father Prigol director of ECMI, a church-based NGO explains that his centre can be helpful to OCWs mainly because "it is the church". Additionally he explains: "The government has to listen to us, especially the Bishop, because we are the church. The media also gives the church attention… We get into schools to do these [migration] seminars because the doors are always open because we are from the church." He adds, "Everyone is afraid of me. Because I am white and because I am a priest and Filipinos have a reverence for both."

Moreover, he declares that his organisation helps both men and women OCWs from all backgrounds, yet from the following comment one can assume that only certain female OCWs will receive help as men and women seem to have different standards of morality to live up to.

> *Prostitutes stayed here once. They told me that was their job in Japan. We have many sea-farers and they are used to having women in every port and these women walked around with sleeveless tops and short skirts. I told the women to go away. It is not appropriate for the centre. We don't want that reputation. The rules are very strict. They are scared of me. I have white skin. I can be strict and respected. If I were Filipino I would have to use the law. They would not have the respect for a Filipino. They would say, "You are like me. Give me another chance." And I only give one chance. I don't give second chances. "Get out. Sorry" [making a sweeping gesture with right hand, arm becoming fully extended, as if showing someone the door].* (Personal interview, January 22, 1998)

Rather than attempt to change men's attitudes (specifically sea-farers who "have women at every port") toward women, the solution for avoiding "a bad reputation" is to banish certain women (who have broken no written rules of the shelter) altogether.

Sister Myrna Tacardon, director of the Centre for Overseas Workers (COW), a church affiliated NGO states:

> *Other NGOs have problems trying to find OCWs to help but we use the church structure to reach Christian communities. People have faith in the church and know we do not take advantage of them. But I know my people and they take it for granted the church will help them so I have to be very strict. We conscientise people little by little as they attend our seminars on leadership, gender-sensitivity [etc], provided by our social workers. The seminars are integrated with the "7-1-3" [saving/lending group – elaborated on in next section below]. The women are surprised [to learn] they have rights. Even the husbands have to acknowledge I am right about women's rights because I am a [Catholic] Sister.* (Personal interview, February 16, 1998)

Although some changes in attitudes may well be occurring through their involvement in the church-affiliated NGOs, the process is not situated within a critical feminist pedagogical perspective. One reason is that the "teacher's" (the nun's or the priests's) authority and the power of her/his various subject positions is not called into question. The failure to acknowledge and recognise these differences and conflicts leaves the overlapping forms of oppression migrant workers experience unexplored making it difficult for migrant workers to build coalitions around common goals. Moreover, the educator who does not assist the "students" (migrant workers) to reflect on values, beliefs and behaviours, previously deemed unchangeable, or does not allow critical analyses through dialogue, group learning, and by valuing the participants' experiences and emotions disempowers the participants and restricts any move toward transformation. I believe the religious NGOs will have difficulties providing education within a CFP framework for migrant workers as some of the problems the ODWs face are embedded in cultural and social issues, influenced by the teachings of the church. Church directed NGOs, such as the two described above, often reinforce the authority of the church, the patriarchal family structure and reassert the stereotypes of male and female roles in society. These lessons have become so natural in society that they are seldom seen and therefore not questioned.

One of the obstacles NGOs face in instigating societal change is that NGO workers have pre-defined the problems for the migrant workers and do not invite the women to draw on their own experiences to reinterpret issues of migration and other social issues. Enloe (1989) warns that women are unlikely to take up an invitation to get involved in such an

NGO if the NGO is not open to learning what women's experiences could add to the understanding of broader social issues. To many women whose time and energies are already stretched beyond the limit there appears to be little connection to their own immediate battles for a better life. These NGOs are also likely to portray migrant women as passive victims who are acted upon but never act and ignore the coping strategies that women employ in their everyday lives. A critical feminist pedagogy can not allow this to occur.

For NGOs operating within a CFP perspective to be effective it is assumed that: The women have the time, energy and will to join the NGO; all members are willing to be actively engaged in this kind of education; and the educator who has come from a "banking" kind of formal education herself is able to "level the power balance" between herself and her "students".

### From Feelings to Transformation

Participants talk about a range of feelings they experienced at all three stages. In chapter six the dominant emotions for many of the participants were anger and fear, discouragement and frustration. For some participants these feelings simmered throughout their ODW jobs and came back to the Philippines with them to be mixed with other feelings about being reunited with their families, their communities and being reintegrated into their home country. It was only at the post-ODW stage that some of the participants felt they could develop greater awareness of their feelings and respond to them.

Feelings have constituted a very powerful resource for liberation in the women's movement. In the 1960s and 70s women's movements developed out of a distrust of accepted authority and truth. The consciousness-raising emphasis was on experience and feelings as guides to theoretical understandings (Walters, 1996). Weiler (1991) similarly declares that exploring feelings as a "critical way of knowing" is a source of true knowledge of the world for women living in societies that deny the value of their perceptions.

From a transformative learning perspective, Neuman (1996) emphasises the importance of "acquiring the ability to recognise, acknowledge and process feelings and emotions [which are] integral aspects of learning from experience" (p.460). Neuman in fact asserts that an unwillingness to respond to these feelings results in a barrier to learning adding that exploring feelings in depth leads to greater self-awareness and initiates changes in meaning structures. Furthermore, as TL is a social experience (Apps, 1996; Daloz et al, 1996; Freire, 1994; Mezirow, 1991), sharing emotions through dialogues with others for example in NGOs, GOs, or informally, returnees can analyse their past and present circumstances by grounding this analysis into everyday experience through a reciprocal interactive relationship among knowers who are linked by common experiences (Hart, 1990). For ODWs this dialogue and analysis can help them become critically aware of their own assumptions and expectations and those of others. Through critical self-reflection, which Mezirow (1990: 13) defines as "reassessing how we have posed problems and reassessing our own orientation to perceiving, knowing, believing, feeling, and acting" they are led to significant personal transformations. Cranton (1994: 65) warns that not all reflective learning is transformative. It can be "either confirmative or transformative. It becomes transformative when assumptions are found to be distorting, unathentic, or otherwise unjustified".

From a CFP perspective, the emphasis is also on the social aspect of listening, questioning and reflecting on each other's stories, which contribute to the recovery of women's authentic realities. Furthermore, CFP acknowledges that sharing feelings/telling stories is not always empowering, as Ellsworth (1989) warns, given the diversity and differences among oppressed people and the fact that varied meanings are constructed in multifarious ways by our multiple subjectivities. Walters (1996) points out that the consciousness-raising groups of the past tended toward a loss of political perspective and too narrow a focus on the individual resulting in political inaction.

However, post-modern feminists have pointed out the need to keep in mind the social construction of subjectivity and the 'unstable' self. When individual selves and histories are viewed as being constructed and negotiated we can consider the forces in which the individuals shape themselves and by which they are shaped. So although tensions and differences are a reality when exploring feelings and experiences, there is a need to acknowledge these differences and work collectively to confront differences in order that we may "expand our awareness of sex, race, and class as interlocking systems of domination, of the way we reinforce and perpetuate these structures (hooks, 1989; 25). Collaborative sharing of emotions and experiences help unfold not only differences but commonalities, upon which solidarity building can occur.

Transformation requires a new way of thinking and a new way of acting (Mezirow, 1991), of letting go of familiar ways of seeing and doing (called "frames of reference") which have been outmoded or uncritically assimilated (Scott, 1997), and revising assumptions, premises, and ways of interpreting experience. Much of the literature on tranformative learning suggests that transformation is triggered by life-altering traumatic life events or as Dirkx (2000) specifies a "disorienting dilemma" that has deep personal significance, such as a new cultural setting. In effect TL is a working through of these traumatic events mediated by critical reflection and potentially resulting in a fundamental shift in meaning perspectives (Mezirow, 1991). In the case of the participants who expressed some form of transformation their 'life-altering events' were related to their ODW experiences and their subsequent post-ODW experiences. Common themes of participants' transformations have included revising their concepts of identity, revisiting basic assumptions about themselves, their relationship to others, and their faith.

A key component to TL is that it is developmental; that is, as adults experience significant change in the process, and at least implicitly, this change is generally considered to be positive (Merriam, Courtney, and Reeves, 1997). Indeed Mezirow (1991:115) asserts "a strong case can be made for calling perspective transformation the *central process* of adult development". The transformative learning examples, which Mia highlights in her narratives is indicative of a positive development. This development was expressed as a desire to help others through NGO volunteer work for example. This was a similar finding to Merriam, Courtenay, & Reeves' (1997) study on HIV-positive adults who "were able to make sense of their situation by concluding that they were destined to make a contribution to the world, largely through being of service to others" (p. 317). This stage of taking action to make a difference in the lives of others is according to Hart (1990) is indicative of a "full cycle of conscious raising" which "includes the actual experience of power on the individual level, a theoretical grasp of power as a larger social reality, and a practical orientation toward emancipatory action" (Hart, 1990, p. 70-71).

It is important to point out one of the main differences between TL and CFP, and that is on the focus of the individual. For although both TL and CFP theorists stress the importance of social interaction in experiencing personal transformation, CFP insists that personal transformation needs to be complemented with societal change from a collective effort. CFP argues that a focus on individual transformation only rather than promoting both individual and collective transformation will not resolve the root structural causes of the marginalization underpinning women's personal conditions as Walters (1996) warned earlier. Similarly, Charles' (1996: 25) has stressed the necessity of locating the stories of marginalized women within wider social relations. There is a need to go beyond the women's narratives of their experiences since for marginalized people, a situation of subordination means that they tend to acquire only a fragmented and partial knowledge of those social relations and structures.

A useful example in this regard is the role of renewed or new faith in a religious community. While this may give some of the ODWs an individual sense of increased self-esteem, confidence and rethinking lifestyle values, such deepening of faith may not help the ODWs' critical understanding of the structures of oppression they face at several societal levels. With the religious communities or institutions in the Philippines, a significant number have remained politically conservative or liberal and unlikely to question structural injustices and violence (e.g., gender inequities and top-down globalization). In the same way, while a number of the ODWs have identified graft and corruption as a problem for Philippine society, this does not necessarily imply that they critically understand the dominant relations of structural violence in which such graft and corruption is a symptom. Thus merely replacing a "corrupt" president with a new leader perceived or hoped for as “clean” while state structures remain unchanged will not resolve the root causes of injustices and the rich-poor gap.

# Chapter Eight: Conclusion

## Introduction

This study has sought to understand and critically analyse the role education has played in the lives of twelve participants who have served as ODWs in various countries. Specifically, I addressed the following research questions: What has been or could be the role of education in its various modes (formal, nonformal and informal) in constructing the identities and influencing the lives of Filipino ODWs before, during and after their ODW experience? How might the needs, concerns and rights of ODWs be better met through the transformation of relationships between the educational and the economic, social, political and cultural sectors of the Philippine society and/or the host countries of ODWs?

In my analysis I drew on Critical Feminist Pedagogy (CFP) to understand the ways in which the educational experiences were empowering or disempowering to the participants. I also used the CFP framework to understand how the needs, concerns and rights of ODWs would be better met through the transformation of relationships between the educational and the economic, social, political and cultural sectors of the Philippine society and/or the host countries of ODWs.

This chapter provides a summary of the major findings and conclusions of the study. Based on these findings, some suggestions of practices for official agencies and NGOs, as well as for further research, will be offered.

## Major findings

The study clearly showed that education in all its modes (formal, nonformal and informal) played a major direct and/or indirect role in influencing and shaping the ODWs' experiences in all three stages (pre-departure, during and post-ODW).

### (a). The Pre-departure Stage

At the pre-departure stage when examining the participants' reasons for migrating, the economic context was paramount, yet other factors significantly overlapped. An examination of two main themes, the economic and work conditions and the family-household system, revealed the complex decision-making process and the individuality of each participant's experience.

The main findings under the **economic and work condition theme** were:

1. Unemployment, underemployment, low wages, poor working conditions and low family incomes were all reasons for wanting to make money overseas as ODWs. Behind these individual economic circumstances is the weak Philippine economy (high inflation, high unemployment, and high level of poverty). Exacerbating the problems of un/underemployment, specifically in the rural areas is the Philippines' reorganisation of agriculture (mainly the move toward export-oriented agriculture) as well as other policies of the *Philippines 2000* program. All of the participants highlight their past and present experiences of poverty, which was/is at a basic subsistence level. Concurrently, the overseas demand for workers in feminised occupations, particularly ODWs, mostly in the Asian region as well as the wage disparity between the participants' jobs in the Philippines and ODW jobs in the receiving countries serve as further incentives to migrate.
2. One of the most common priorities of the participants was to finance the education of family members (children and siblings). This finding overlaps with the second theme, the family-household system. Payment of school fees was cited by five of the participants as one of their main financial needs, which influenced their decision to migrate. School fees are paid at both public and private institutions although private institutions demand a much higher fee. Investment in schooling (public or private) is seen by the participants as a wise investment in their families' 'human capital' as the chances of better jobs supposedly improves for those with higher education.

These findings indicate that Filipino women are not without skills and talents to contribute to the economy. Rather the economy presently cannot fully benefit from them. Moreover, it must be recognised that the social, reproductive, and economic relationships that structure the conditions faced by many (poorer) women, channel them into the informal and subsistence sectors (Patel, 1996) leaving women underemployed. Additionally, the findings demonstrate that national development issues are at the root of the migration phenomenon in the Philippines. It is appropriate to turn to the Gender and Development framework to address the Philippines' national development issues. The GAD approach necessitates a political agenda with the aim of transforming structural inequalities so that men and women are equal partners in the development process and share in the labour, resources, recognised status and power at all levels (Rathgeber, 1990). To achieve sustainable development, dominant structures must be changed. The GAD approach affirms the need for a critical educational component for migrant women. This educational program must involve critically understanding inequitable national development policies and the transformation of these policies. However, the data indicate that the participants' first priorities are not with the broader social and economic needs, rather their priorities lie with their immediate practical needs. This requires that both strategic national and practical immediate needs be critically understood and met, but the question is can different priorities be addressed at different times and how? Patel (1996) argues that empowering educational strategies must intervene at both the strategic and practical needs simultaneously. The educational programs must assist women to challenge patriarchal ideology and also enable women to gain greater access to material resources.

Under the second theme, **the family-household system**, the main findings emphasised that the women's informal education, such as values and attitudes have been heavily influenced by the social and cultural contexts in which they live. In a number of ways the family-household system played an important role in shaping gender relations and influencing the participants' decision to migrate. The data support these findings:

1. The family-household system is of utmost importance to the participants in all aspects of their lives including their decision to migrate. However, participants were not directly coerced into migration by their family-household members, rather the women's family-households' economic circumstances were the reasons behind migration. The participants' need to financially contribute to their family-households, combined with their strong sense of values, their attributes, such as being healthy, educated, having courage; and their personal desires to travel/work abroad inspired the women to begin their negotiations of migration with their family-household members.

2. Negotiating personal motives to migrate was done within their normative roles in the family-household. All but one of the participants negotiated their decision to migrate with family-household members and received permission to migrate and/or "blessings" from the head of the family-household. Although contributing to the family-household income is declared as paramount in their decisions to migrate, the participants also had personal motivations for wanting to migrate, such as wanting to see something of the world; to meet other people, possibly a potential husband; or to become more economically independent and equal in the bread-winning role. Participants could get what they personally wanted from migration and still maintain their role as the dutiful daughter/sacrificing mother by sending remittances home for the family-household's use.
3. Within the family-household context, negotiations for the women's migration were determined by the age and stage of the household's developmental cycle, with older (past age 40) "married-with-children-over-age-15" participants having more bargaining power than younger and/or single counterparts.
4. The two participants who were single mothers at the time of migrating were in a sense indirectly coerced to migrate because their ex-husbands had abandoned the family-household, leaving the survival of the family-household entirely to them.
5. The participants were already contributing to the family-household income through their reproductive work, subsistence farming, and income generating projects such as sewing, making and selling sweets, doing laundry for neighbours, etc. before migrating but participants did not recognise or classify these jobs as "real" work. By transferring their domestic work to an overseas household, the salary it earns makes it "real" work in the eyes of the participants and members of Philippine society in general. However, the states of the receiving countries do not recognise domestic work as "real" work even though it is paid because it takes place in the private domain of the employers' homes. This lack of recognition results in a denial of legal labour protection afforded to ODWs.
6. The close family-ties and interdependence of the family-household members enabled the participants to migrate by recruiting them or informing them of overseas jobs through informal networks, by contributing to the costs of the processing fees required to migrate, or providing care to the dependent family-household members left behind.

7. The patriarchal family-household ideology influences the participants in their daily lives through the subordination of females by males not just within the home but in society at large. One of the main ways this ideology is expressed is in the sexual division of labour at various stages of the family-household development cycle. Men are seen as the family-household "breadwinners" while women are seen as homemakers. Sexist stereotypes result in greater expectations that women will make the necessary sacrifices for their families. These sacrifices included giving up job/career or education as soon as married, working longer hours in the home to make ends meet, migrating/leaving family to work elsewhere and remitting large portions of their salary to family-households from abroad rather than spending any of it on themselves. These stereotypes have resulted in the rationalisation of inequalities both inside and outside the home. Some participants see their becoming the family-household "breadwinner" through migration an expression of their rejection of sexist stereotypes, while others felt their migration was necessary for economic reasons but still commend the "ideal" traditional husband/wife roles. However, even though ODWs' monetary contribution to the Philippine economy is widely recognised, the stereotype of women as non-breadwinners persists.
8. The Filipino values of *pananagutan* (sense of responsibility), *galang* (respect and authority to elders), *bayanihan* (team-spirit, unselfish co-operation), and *utang na loob* (a debt of gratitude to family-household members and others, which requires that favours be returned) are four moral imperatives that are held in great esteem by both men and women. However, women family-household members, who are, according to the participants, more reliable and responsible than men, are more likely to practice *pananagutan* and *utang na loob*.

These findings demonstrate the necessity of women, within a CFP setting, developing a critical understanding of gender issues affecting their lives. This must include understanding the ways in which society imposes identities on men and women and questioning the dominant message that women are suited to certain roles but not to others (Medel-Anonuevo, 1996). Patel (1996: 97) adds that, "educational interventions must be designed both to challenge patriarchal ideology and to enable women to gain greater access to and control over both material and informational resources." Patel goes on to state that this education process requires women to examine themselves and their situations in new ways, to explode sexist misconceptions and recognise their strengths and develop positive self-images, stressing the need to evolve from a collection of individuals into a cohesive collective. Much work has to continue in exploring alternatives, specifically finding ways to apply these understandings to the women's realities. For example, is it possible for women to avoid stereotypical female roles when their options are limited? What can be done if women feel that the income generating projects they are involved in, which are vital for their families' survival are reinforcing their stereotypical roles? Who will help with the traditional family roles in the home if the male family-household members refuse? Dionisio (1991) declares that to establish equality between genders, both men and women have to be critically aware of the inequities they face in both macro and micro contexts. Wieringa (1994) and Mezirow (1977) warn that the process of developing a critical awareness of the many ways gender inequities are played out can be tense and threatening as perceptions, cultural and social assumptions are challenged. Hence, Wieringa (1994) suggests that the process be done with sensitivity at a pace established by the women themselves and negotiated by facilitators/NGO leaders and participants/learners, furthermore, the priorities the women would like to tackle must be decided upon by the women themselves. Patel (1996) reminds us of an often missed point, which is that women's empowerment liberates and empowers men on both material and psychological levels. She states that women strengthen the impact of political movements, women's struggle for knowledge and material resources benefit families and communities, and men are freed from the role of oppressor so that the possibilities of relationships with women based on shared responsibility and mutual respect are opened up.

### *Formal education at the pre-departure stage*

The level of education attained by the participants reflects the educational profile of ODWs, who generally have above average educational attainment and fluency in English compared with the rest of the Philippine population. Many receiving countries insist on a high level of education as selection criteria for migrant workers, so the demand for highly educated migrants is further reinforced. Filipino ODWs are generally highly educated with at least a high school education, which is the case for all the participants, half of whom also have post-secondary education. Despite financial difficulties and distance from secondary and tertiary educational institutions, all participants completed high school with the help of family-household strategies or through their own strength of will. Four of the participants attended private schools, which required even more sacrifices on the part of the family-households because of the higher school fees that private institutions charge. These participants believe that the private school system offers superior educational and occupational opportunities than the public school system.

The data also indicated that the family-household system was highly influential in their educational attainment. Maintaining good interpersonal relationships with kin through reciprocal obligations and privileges is an important value to most Filipinos, and this was no exception for the participants. Generally, parents do what they can to provide education for their children and children are expected to oblige their parents by studying hard. Elder siblings are expected to assist with their younger siblings' education. These expectations have resulted in the family-household's sacrifices to educate the eldest child, the eldest daughter, or the child who seems most likely to do well in school who in turn would help support their siblings' education.

The findings indicate that three main factors resulted in all but one of the women's lack of choice about their career path, 1) authority value, 2) their parents' sense of *pananagutan* (responsibility) and 3) their family-households' limited resources. Not having the opportunity to make their own informed career decision by taking into consideration their values, interests, personality and skills affected the women's sense of job satisfaction. These women were on the look out for other job opportunities. Additionally, those who were dissatisfied only with the salary of their professional jobs were also looking for jobs with a higher salary. These were important factors in the participants' decision to go overseas.

Although all university courses are open to women, the participants who obtained degrees received them in traditionally feminine professions: teachers, secretaries, and midwives. With parents (or elder siblings), choosing and influencing their educational choices to stereotypically gendered courses, they have joined the growing surplus pool of unemployed women educated in nursing, midwifery and teaching (and a surplus of male engineers, lawyers, and businesspeople). Migration for employment and a better paying alternative is considered a good alternative to unemployment awaiting the educated surplus pool of workers.

As gender inequities are closely tied to the traditional assumptions about men and women's roles in families and society, a challenge of traditional perspectives might be seen as threatening and cause tensions in families and communities. As the data indicated and the sample of participants represented, ODWs come from various social and cultural contexts. This reinforces the importance of critically understanding the rural/urban, middle/lower class, religious, etc. realities, socio-cultural contexts, and the obvious need to consider each of their experiences, emotions, and concerns in any educational program. As previously stressed, the women must have the power to decide for themselves how and when personal and social transformations should occur.

### *Informal Education at the pre-departure stage*

Signs of the increasing phenomenon of labour migration are evident in all parts of the Philippines. For many Filipinos international labour migration has become the typical means to self and cultural realisation. For the participants, informal networks were the most effective means of getting information about female labour migration and for some it was one of the most useful ways of obtaining pre-departure information, particularly as most of the participants felt the government's compulsory PDOS lacking.

### *Non-formal Education at the pre-departure stage*

The main form of non-formal education at the pre-departure stage that is compulsory for all legally employed migrant workers is the PDOS. The POEA is entrusted with the responsibility of providing a PDOS, which provides an outreach education program to enable potential OCWs to make informed decisions. However, most of the participants pointed out a number of failings with the PDOS indicating that the program was far from empowering and indeed was for some disempowering. Some NGO worker interviewees supported the weaknesses described by the participants maintaining that PDOS, in fact, fosters attitudes that will result in docile uncomplaining employees instead of providing knowledge or support for workers' self-protection. Not all participants received PDOS, including, not surprisingly, the illegally recruited participants. For those who did receive PDOS one of the main complaints was about the content. Participants felt there was not enough focus on learning about their specific host countries' culture and society, nor about their rights and how to handle difficult situations on the job. Furthermore, the participants raise the concern about the lack of time spent on the important topics in PDOS. They declare it would be time well spent, especially if the PDOS was offered closer to their homes/villages rather than only in Manila so that they could attend over a period of weeks without having to travel far from home to attend.

The two participants recruited illegally raised important points about the PDOS. One concern was that, as PDOS is usually taken only a few days before departure, new ODWs are not made aware of the dangers of trafficking. The other major concern is that, as illegal recruits, they received no PDOS and the details of their journeys and the nature of their jobs were kept secret until after they arrived in the host country. Hence there should be something in place whereby all potential OCWs (even those contemplating going illegally) can receive information and guidance counselling so they can make informed decisions. If they did go illegally they would be better prepared to cope. NGO workers suggested that migration should be included in the formal education system so that children, who are exposed to the ideas of migration early in life, are provided with a thorough knowledge of issues related to migration.

### (b). The ODW Stage

In the ODW during stage the data indicate that the ODW labour process is highly hierarchical and asymmetrical in nature. The ODW job is structured in such a way that differences are constantly created and recreated based on socially constructed boundaries such as race, class and gender.

One of the themes addressed in this stage was the economic oppression of the participants. The most common violations of contracts resulting in economic oppression were: having to work for two or more families, working overtime without pay, not receiving leisure time or enough time for a full night's sleep, not being paid the wage agreed on, not being paid on time, or not being paid at all, and not receiving adequate room and board. In a few cases women were expected to work in occupations which were not previously agreed upon (e.g. prostitution or domestic work).

A major revelation in the findings is the contradictions the women faced on the job within the employers' homes. The first contradiction was related to their living arrangements. The participants were obviously present in the employers' households yet at the same time they were rendered invisible by unequal social practices. Naming practices further reinforced the asymmetrical behaviour. The second contradiction was how the ODWs and employer families were living in close personal proximity, yet the ODWs and employer family members were living at a great (psychological) distance (both in the home and in the receiving society at large), divided by artificially created boundaries. Spatial deference was one of the major themes the participants described. With a few exceptions, the participants' need for privacy, a place to rest, and a place for their personal belongings was rarely considered. The dependence of the ODWs on the employer for all their life's necessities and wants was reinforced by their restricted freedom of movement and right to privacy. Exacerbating the problems the participants faced was the fact that most of them were isolated from other people outside the employers' families, leaving them little or no opportunities to establish networks of information and social support.

Racism plays a significant role in the quality of life experienced in the ODW during stage, as it undergirds the laws of the receiving countries and influences the relationships between employers and employees. Filipino women are racialised to be "naturally" good domestic workers, nurturing, docile, and good with children. Furthermore, their racial characteristics mark them as "others", which also makes them desirable as ODWs (in addition to their high level of education, their ability to speak English, their "Americanised" ways) because it sets them apart from nationals in the receiving societies. For added measure of ensuring there is no confusion between citizens and ODWs, clothing, such as "maidish" uniforms were enforced for many of the participants.

Agencies clearly advertise the ODWs' nationality and play up stereotyped racialised images of ODWs depending on the source countries' availability. Advertisements explicitly declare that the cost of the maids depend on the maids' race/ethnicity. In some countries Filipinos are more costly than other nationalities and in others Filipinos are one of the cheapest.

Interestingly, the qualities that are often stereotypical ascribed to Filipino women (as being "naturally" cut out for domestic work), were also cited by many participants when describing the positive qualities that make them so much in demand as ODWs. Their culturally inscribed identities and values are frequently exploited by employers who are anxious to capture these for their own benefit.

Findings under the fourth theme, gender inequalities, attest that in addition to race, ethnicity, and class, gender is an important dimension in relationships between employers and the receiving societies at large and the ODWs. Receiving societies often look upon Filipino ODWs with suspicion, accusing them of bringing vice, disease, and destroying families. A few participants were accused of being prostitutes or at least assumed to be willing to occasionally have sex for money.

The "mistresses of the household" were in all cases the ones overseeing the participants' daily work and life. As 'the women of the house', female employers' identities as wives and mothers are threatened when other women take up the task of domesticity in their homes, a job attributed to them because the private domain of the home is considered women's responsibility. This results in an on-going conflict between mistresses of the home and ODWs. From this relationship, a major source of (potential) conflict that arose between them was often jealousy from female members of the employers' households or sexual harassment by male members of the employers' household. Even participants who did not experience jealousy or sexual harassment were warned in the PDOS of this potential problem and named it as one of the most difficult aspects to have to deal with on the ODW job. The PDOS recommendations are for the ODWs to avoid using fragrances and tone down their looks, recommendations which are far too simplistic as they focus on superficialities and reinforces the notion that if sexual harassment occurred it was because the ODWs did not do enough to "tone down" their looks. For some women the solution to reducing or avoiding jealous friction and sexual harassment was to take great pains to avoid speaking, looking, talking, or being near or alone with the "Sir". These solutions often resulted in consequential inconveniences for the ODWs, interrupting their work schedules and limiting the ODWs' movements within the household even further.

An important finding underlying all the themes in this stage is the ways in which the laws and policies of the receiving countries reflect and reinforce the employers' apparent desire for undemanding ODWs (undemanding in terms of time, money, space or interaction). Unfair labour practices and migration policies give the employers substantial control over their ODWs and at the same time make ODWs vulnerable and dependent. Many of the exploitative conditions ODWs work under are supported by laws, which use race and other ideologies as justification to deny ODWs the full rights and freedoms that citizens in the receiving countries enjoy. One example of a law that is racist and sexist is the law forbidding ODWs who are working in Singapore from marrying a Singaporean citizen. Moreover, ODWs must undergo regular pregnancy tests whilst working in countries such as Malaysia, Taiwan and Singapore and if they are found to be pregnant they are usually fired or will not have their contracts renewed.

Ironically, whilst the ODWs are valued for their stereotypical maternal characteristics, the ODWs' actual motherhood status is denied. For most participants who were mothers, they were not encouraged and often denied the right to speak of their children, communicate with them, have photos of them, or visibly pine for them. Again the laws of receiving countries deny the ODWs the right to bring their children and/or spouses with them. Furthermore, although the law does not deny women who are mothers from applying and working as ODWs, it is often perceived by ODWs that employers prefer unencumbered workers so some ODWs do not acknowledge they have children.

Despite the oppressive backdrop of the ODWs' work and living conditions and the ineffectiveness of the law to protect the ODWs' human rights (in fact the perpetuation of exploitation supported by the laws), the theme of resistance and empowerment in the during stage offers glimmers of hope.

The data indicated that the ODWs exerted "everyday resistance" and in some cases mobilised against injustice to make structural changes in their work/living circumstances. Therefore, although the participants described the unequal power relationships and the potential risks and dangers involved in live-in domestic employment, which in many ways were disempowering, they also give examples of acts of resistance, of refusing to accept and conform to the powers that be. In this way they empowered themselves to challenge the social and political *status quo*.

The ODWs' acts of resistance highlighted the social processes, tensions, contradictions and complexities experienced by the ODWs that have a potential for change. Their strategies and tactics ranged from the passive non-violent, to active non-violent to collective acts.

The collective acts of resistance, particularly in Hong Kong, have resulted in structural changes and improvements for ODWs. For the women, committing acts of resistance is to assert their humanity; to push the boundaries with the goal to make temporary change for themselves or to make permanent change for themselves and others; and to meet their needs.

The live-in requirement, which was compulsory for all participants, had a huge bearing on their ability to resist oppression and the actions they took to resist. Isolation from other people and groups, the ODW's precarious temporary residency status, the receiving countries' negligence in protecting ODWs' basic human rights, as well as the Philippine government's apparent lack of support for and assistance to ODWs resulted in serious hardships for the ODWs and influenced their acts of resistance.

The strategies of resistance provide potential for social transformation but some of the strategies lead to deeper forms of oppression for themselves and others, such as the acts of deference.

In accessing which strategies had the most profound social transformation, the collective acts resulted in longer-term societal change. Individual acts within the confines of the employer's home, such as active non-violence improved the situation for the individual and may have a lasting change on the employer's and the employer's children's behaviours toward his/her workers. Passive non-violent acts helped improved the workers' lives at a psychological level, but rarely resulted in long-term societal change.

Lessons that can be drawn for emancipation are those of collective acts of resistance which take place in NGOs. Some of the migrant worker NGOs both in the Philippines and in some of the host countries draw on theories of critical pedagogy and critical feminist pedagogy.

The findings further indicate that the participants, when they were in need of help overseas, generally lacked trust of the assistance that government administrations, Embassies or Consulates provide. Many were also wary of recruitment/hiring agencies' help. Where NGOs existed in host countries, many participants said they would prefer to go to them. Their lack of trust of government administrations was based on their own experiences and from what they had heard from other ODWs. A common complaint was that often Embassy staff encouraged abused ODWs to return to their abusive employers with the suggestion to "try to be more patient and understanding with the employer".

The findings suggest that some of the participants would be more prepared to face difficulties if they returned overseas because through their experiences they have gained personal confidence and a better sense of where (and where not) to go for help. They also declare that having learned which method was most effective in dealing with maltreatment they would do the same thing again if necessary, do it more quickly, and be much less tolerant of any abuse or exploitation. However, a few participants felt that what ODWs should do is try harder to be nice, be patient, and not complain, despite the fact that these suggestions did not work for them.

Regarding the educational dimensions of the ODW during stage, it is clear that opportunities for accessing formal and non-formal education programs are very limited. As explained in detail below, Hong Kong is one of a few countries where ODWs may have opportunities to study formal education programs through correspondence or distance education. In other countries ODWs may be permitted to study non-formal education courses in, for example, cooking or languages. In addition to the informal learning presented above, the ODWs stated that they learned means of reducing intercultural barriers informally within the employers' family-household. These included; learning some of the host countries' language with the help of the children or adult employers, learning to cook the host countries' main dishes as quickly and correctly as possible, and as much as possible learning to avoid being alone with older male members of the family-household, and, always to direct questions to the female employer rather than the male employer.

### (c). The Post-ODW stage

At the post-ODW stage the data indicate that for the ODW returnees the return was not a smooth process. The difficulties were explained within the three themes: reintegration at the family-household level, reintegration at the societal/economic level and reintegration at the personal level, with several overlaps between themes.

#### *(i). Reintegration at the family level*

At the family-household level, all members required re-adjusting, including the ODWs, their spouses, and their children, in-laws, parents and siblings. The emotions the women (mothers and non-mothers alike) experienced immediately after returning to the Philippines ranged from hopelessness, guilt, sadness, despondency, frustration, disappointment, discontentment, and uncertainty to (and perhaps in conflict with) feelings of satisfaction (after seeing how their families had benefited from their remittances). For the women who were mothers, the feelings of guilt, sadness, and frustration were the result of having left their families, most especially their children.

Emotions operate within a context of social structures determined by ideologies. The family-household ideology, which emphasises distinct roles for mothers and fathers, girls and boys within the family-household, was one of the main ideologies that affected the participants' and their family-household members' emotions. This was particularly true of the participants who were mothers and their children who had been left behind. The pain of separation was intensified by the failure of children's gender-based expectations for mothers to nurture them and mothers' self-imposed expectations to follow cultural and ideological inscribed duties in the family-household.

For all but one of the participants, the women's roles in the family-household did not change dramatically since returning. Only one married mother participant stated that the patriarchal relationship with her husband changed since she came back. Her husband's role and her own role in the family are no longer strictly designated according to traditional gender expectations. This occurred mainly because during her time overseas their roles were "reversed"; she became the "breadwinner" whilst her husband became the primary caregiver. Since returning from abroad, the participant feels that her relationship with her husband is "more equal now" as they both share the breadwinner and nurturer roles as well as decision making related to the family-household.

*(ii). Reintegration at the economic level*

The findings under this theme demonstrate that for the participants their temporary ODW experience actually resulted in fewer chances of securing a job in the Philippines. Of the twelve participants, seven are presently unemployed (actively seeking employment), one is temporarily employed, one is a full- time homemaker (not actively seeking employment), two are self employed in their own small businesses, and one is volunteering with an NGO. Three of the unemployed participants are going back overseas within the next month. Seven of the other participants would like to go back overseas but for various reasons they cannot go right away. Only one of the participants has gone back to the career for which she was educated. All the other participants will not return to their previous types of work because of *deskilling*, lost interest in the work or because there is no work of that nature available. The problems they have faced in finding employment since returning include discrimination [age discrimination, discrimination based on past ODW job, and discrimination based on the assumption that returnees are wealthy and don't really need a job], a lack of recent Philippine work experience, *deskilling*, and mainly that there are simply no jobs available.

Five participants were in 'a transition phase' of unemployment or temporary low-paying employment as they are mainly waiting for an overseas job opportunity to come up.

These problems are tied to the inability of the economy to re-absorb returnees. The Philippines continues to suffer a mal-developed economy, which has resulted in low-incomes, widespread poverty and a very low standard of living. The Philippine economy is oriented to commodity exports and relies on imports of high priced manufactured items, which places the country and its people in a precarious position in the global economy. The country continues to be open to and heavily dependent on foreign investors. The policies of liberalisation and privatisation of government services as well as the far-reaching influences of globalisation have contributed to poverty and unemployment. Women are very much affected by the current economic climate. Forty two percent of permanently displaced workers between January and November, 2001 were women. Women's unemployment rate has increased from 9.9 percent to 10.3 percent in 2001 as more women than men joined the labour force during that period. Currently, 9.2 million women are still looking for work (*Ulat Lila*, 2002).

The savings the participants accumulated overseas were low (ranging from 2500 to 10,000 pesos) and only six participants returned with savings. Their savings upon return were put toward small businesses (*sari-sari* store, restaurant, and a "buy and sell" business), and in one case a small lot of land, loaned to friends, used to pay back debts or buy *pasalubong*. Four participants were never paid in one or all of their ODW jobs (although in one participant's case she was paid but all her earnings went to pay back the traffickers). Although eight participants had been sending remittances home, these remittances were used for their family-household's daily living expenses.

Several participants declared that some retraining is necessary for economic integration, yet with the exception of two participants, the retraining the participants received was through NGOs rather than through GOs. OWWA is a government organisation with a mandate to attend to the needs and concerns of OCWs; specifically it is responsible for assisting OCW returnees re-integrate into the economy. All legal OCWs are required to pay a compulsory membership fee to OWWA. The participants' complaints about government assistance through OWWA ranged from a lack of information about programs, inaccessibility of programs, being ineligible for programs, and lack of immediate assistance (a waiting time of more than two years was the common problem).

Although the findings and other research clearly indicate most (approximately 70 percent) of the livelihood projects of returnees fail, due to such problems as a lack of business experience, inability to market their products or services, and lack of adequate funds to keep the business going, participants not planning to immediately return overseas felt that these projects were their main, if not only, alternative to alleviating the poverty they are facing.

NGO workers acknowledge that the livelihood projects/ income generating activities are often not successful in the long term yet many NGOs are willing to continue to push this short-term assistance. However, NGOs operating in the CFP perspective cannot reduce their efforts to offering loans or assistance in establishing small enterprises because it is not enough to simply tackle the economic conditions of ODWs. Their positions in society must also be addressed.

It is evident that NGOs and other migrant worker organisations have a wide range of means for tackling migrant women's issues. However, those that attempt to go beyond the income generating projects, take on a CFP perspective, and aim at empowering migrant women have a goal of making long term improvements in ODWs' lives through challenging the political, economic and social *status quo*.

### *(iii). Reintegration at the personal level*

Several participants felt that their overseas experiences constituted a life-altering event, which changed their meaning perspectives, and since returning they felt an obligation to help other ODWs through NGOs. One of the main objectives of their volunteer work with fellow ODWs is to assist them economically, by providing income generating assistance and training. However, one participant in particular stresses that she believes that kind of assistance is not enough. The NGO she works with goes beyond income generating to assist

ODWs (returning and potential ODWs). She stresses that ODWs must critically analyse what goes on in society to understand how issues of race, class and gender influence their position in society and push for changes in societal structures and in people's ways of thinking.

## The study recommendations

The study recommendations address the second research question: How might the needs, concerns and rights of ODWs be better met through the transformation of relationships between the educational and the economic, social, political and cultural sectors of the Philippine society and/or the host countries of ODWs?

The following recommendations have been developed from an examination of main concerns in the study findings.

### (a). Formal education.

Although the Philippine government committed itself to the UN's EFA in 1990 with a goal to provide education for all by 2000 (which was then reaffirmed for 2015), and the *Philippine 2000* program also committed the government to increasing the funding in education and training, the data show that poverty and inefficiency continue to hamper the success of these programs. Children in various parts of the country experience poor quality education and restricted access to schooling. Therefore, one of the areas where improvement is urgently needed is in government funding of schools and provision of accessibility of schooling for all children regardless of class, region, rural or urban locale. The quality of teacher education and teacher salaries must also be improved to help alleviate teacher shortages and improve the quality of instruction children receive in the public school system in particular.

While the data do not support the notion that formal education directly resulted in a desire to migrate, indirectly it has (had) influence. Because migration is a huge phenomenon in the Philippines, which has a personal connection to so many children across the country, it cannot be ignored in the school curriculum. One off, short seminars offered by the churches, that present "pains and gains" of migration in relations to values education/religious studies to one age group only, is not sufficient and is at best biased and incomplete. The formal education system must undertake migration as an integral topic in the school curriculum with the objective not just to inform children about the phenomenon of migration but to help children understand and critically analyse the root causes, and the historical, economical, political and social implications and outcomes of migration. In preparing the content a variety of perspectives should be included, with an invitation for input from NGOs, POs and others. In this regard, there are some hopeful signs that at least in the social studies curriculum, foreign workers' issues are being considered. A forthcoming Civic and Culture textbook series (Toh and Cawagas, 2002) for use in Elementary schools, for example, directly includes topics on the realities of OFWs, including ODWs. How the content is presented is as important as the content itself. Therefore, teachers should be provided with workshops and professional development sessions that would help them integrate the topic of migration into the classroom.

The data indicate that the participants' educational experiences were very much shaped by gender and class constraints. For example, the participants who went to college were told/encouraged by family-household members to study in traditionally feminine occupations, such as midwives, teachers, and secretaries despite the participants' own desires to study in another field. Partly due to families' low incomes the courses chosen for the participants were shorter courses, such as the two-year secretarial course or even the four year degree courses, which are shorter compared to the five year and longer courses in, for example, engineering and medicine. Because of poverty, many of the participants' families could afford to educate only one child, with the hope that the child would in turn help pay for the education of her siblings, once her schooling was completed and a job attained. There is a general feeling that female family-household members, particularly eldest daughters, would excel in school and would be more reliable for offering assistance later. These assumptions in part contributed to the participants' decisions to migrate.

The data revealed that at the ODW during stage, in all but one case, obtaining access to formal education institutions was not possible for ODWs in the receiving countries. This was due mainly to the immigration policies of the host countries, which restrict migrants from studying for credit[1]. But the participants also pointed out that studying would not have been possible even if the policies allowed it simply because they had little or no free time, their freedom to go outside the employers' home was restricted, and they could not afford to pay tuition fees. The one participant who did study toward a diploma was working in Hong Kong. The institution with which she studied was a correspondence school. Although correspondence may be one option for studying whilst abroad, ODWs' restricted freedom to access post boxes and post offices in the host countries pose a serious obstacle for ODWs desiring to take this option.

It should be noted that there are now more educational institutions offering distance education, which if their circumstances allow, the ODWs can access. For example, the University of the Philippines Open University (UPOU) offers a number of courses for distance education students. As of 1997, UPOU began a program developed specifically for OCWs in Hong Kong who are expecting to return to the Philippines. Presently, the courses offered are New Enterprising Planning (offered in three 15 week sessions) and Personal Entrepreneurial Development (PED). The majority of the enrolees are women ODWs who are planning to reintegrate into the Philippine economy[2].

The restrictions that the ODWs experience in studying in the host countries are part of wider discriminatory practices that they face. Policies, practices, and attitudes toward migrant workers must be challenged and changed.

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[1] In Canada, under the LCP, live-in caregivers can only take part-time courses for credit if s/he is successful in his/her application for a student authorization from Citizenship and Immigration Canada. To qualify for the student authorization s/he must demonstrate that s/he has a place to live, show that the studies are part-time, and present a letter from the institution stating s/he is accepted in the part-time course. The authorization costs $125.00 and is valid for one institution only.

[2] The cost of the 15 week courses is 5000 pesos (HK$ 950). The maximum number of students in each session is 30 people. The students must be in Hong Kong during the time they are taking the course. The students can get additional help from UP tutors by telephone or they can use the email at the Learning Center in Hong Kong. Moreover, a tutor from UP flies to Hong Kong two or three times per session to provide assistance on Sundays, which is usually the day ODWs have off. The final exams are sent from UP to the Learning Center where they are administered (personal interview with Dado Sibayan, UPOU instructor, Office of Academic Support and Instructional Services, UP, April 1998).

NGO workers in the Philippines and Hong Kong provided examples of how policy changes have occurred through lobbying, petition writing, and information campaigns. However, this is not possible in many of the host countries in this study, particularly in the Middle East, where freedoms are restricted. Assembly and association for example are illegal and for migrant workers this would result in imprisonment and/or deportation in many Middle Eastern countries. In this situation the Philippine government must negotiate with the governments of the receiving countries. NGOs must lobby for an international framework of rights and advocate their governments to sign and ratify such a framework (Heyzer et al, 1992). Additionally, the strategies that some NGOs in the Philippines are presently undertaking are to demand that bilateral agreements be negotiated (which would include setting wage and benefit standards for migrant workers) in order to offer some measure of protection to OCWs. For example, the use of a Standard Employment Contract (which would set consistent standards of pay, work hours, time off, job security, etc. for all workers regardless of nationality) should be developed through bilateral initiatives with receiving countries. These NGOs and others are also pressuring the Philippine government to continue its work in repatriation, policy-making, welfare protection and arbitration in crisis situations. Receiving countries must also exert efforts in promoting the use of a Standard Employment Contract. Many NGOs are actively campaigning for countries around the world to sign international conventions, which are "the only legally binding and enforceable documents in the realm of human rights" (Goldberg, 1996: 173). These include: 1. The Convention on the Protection of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families (although this Convention has been criticised for not specifically addressing the needs of migrant women, see Goldberg, 1996); 2. The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (which does not specify migrant women but raises issues of equality and discrimination and the need for all women to be treated fairly in all aspects of life); 3. The International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights and; 4. The International Convention on Civil and Political Rights. Neither of the last two make mention specifically to migrants or women, yet the demands for the right to work and earn a living, the right to protection and fair treatment in the workplace apply to migrant women.

Larger international NGO coalitions like Migrante, Gabriela in the Philippines and Unifil in Hong Kong, Philippine Women's Centre and LINGAP in Canada are constantly helping to establish other migrant women organisations, which lobby, campaign, create solidarity, and up-grade skills and knowledge. These are actions that must continue.

At the post-ODW stage many participants faced difficulties re-integrating into the Philippine economy after returning. Therefore, it is recommended that the government do more to assist returnees re-integrate in the economy and society by offering them counselling, information, and free formal educational programs, or at least low interest loans to pay for tuition, which would make them more employable and help create jobs. This need not be done through OWWA (as OWWA has proven itself inefficient and unable to manage loans and other forms of assistance to returnees) but through TESDA or DECS.

### (b). Informal education

In all three stages, gender structures influence the women's lives both in the home, at work, and in society/ies at large. Scott (1998: 179) provide a useful summary of structure, which clarifies my meaning of the word "structure": "Structure is the social organisation (including assumptions about race, class and gender), institutions, and cultural products (like language and knowledge) of society, or the external social context of behaviour". Gender constraints limit women's control and usage of resources and leisure time. Changes in gender structures due to economic hardships (i.e. women moving into the "breadwinner" roles) have not significantly impacted on society's perception of women as equal partners in the home or in the workplace. For example, women are seen to be primarily responsible for the well-being of the family-household and the up-keep of the home whether they are working outside the home or not, resulting in longer working hours each day in a "double or triple shift". Women are often expected to make more sacrifices "for the sake of the family" than men. Furthermore, the work that women perform, especially reproductive work or work done in or near the home (such as swine-raising and making products for sale) is not recognised as "real" work (Beneria, 1992; Jacobson, 1994). The data indicate that there is a contradiction between the women's perceived and actual roles and contributions. It is recommended that the GAD theory be drawn on. The GAD approach emphasises understanding how men's and women's roles and responsibilities are interrelated and how equal partnerships between men and women is necessary in the development process. The empowerment approach of GAD aims at transforming structural inequities (Moser, 1989; Rathgeber, 1990). Hence, in the Philippines, inequitable national development policies (e.g. land distribution policies, export driven economic strategies, etc.), must be critically understood and transformed with a commitment to women's authentic development in mind.

A greater awareness and critical understanding of how gender structures affect the women's lives is needed at all three stages. And, as hooks (1988) reminds us, there is a need to understand how race and class, in addition to gender structures, serve as oppressive systems of domination. Although some of the participants have participated in the workshops and seminars offered by NGOs, mainly at the post-ODW stage, several participants still fail to see their own contributions and potential as providers, producers and leaders. What is required is a perspective transformation, which is the "learning process by which adults come to recognise their culturally induced dependency roles and relationships and the reasons for them and take action to overcome them" (Mezirow, 1991: 7). As the learners become transformed, they become critically aware of the "pscyho-cultural assumptions" (which are culturally or socially determined, internalised and taken-for-granted views of a person's role in society) that restrain their actions and behaviours, and become aware of new courses of actions and relationships. New knowledge results in a new meaning perspective, as it does not fit into the existing meaning perspective. A transformatory approach educates and organises for a shift in power relations within the women's lives and broader society (Dionisio, 1991). Mezirow's TL theory on perspective transformation has been criticised for a lack of focus on social action, since personal transformation does not necessarily result in social transformation. However, TL is valuable in helping to develop critical thinking and it can contribute to learners becoming social actors. A CFP perspective cannot accept that transformation has occurred when nothing of substance has changed, other than the learner. For as Weiler (1988: 58) declares "feminists …assert their commitment to changing the position of women and therefore to changing society." Therefore, in addition to a personal perspective transformation, collective social change outcomes must occur. To borrow from

Freire, this requires a process of "conscientization", which is learning to perceive social, political and economic forces and learning to resist and transform them. Conscientization is a constant movement between the action and the reflection on the action. The CFP process is, as the data has indicated, most likely to successfully occur within an NGO setting where the relationships between learners and teachers are horizontal rather than hierarchical and the setting is "safe" where, in group dialogues the learners' voices, experiences, and emotions are valued and shared, which provide the basis of understanding broader social issues. There are a few examples of migrant NGOs, which provide potential lessons for such a process. These include Migrante and Gabriela, which emphasise listening, questioning and reflecting on each others' stories, understanding migration experiences in relation to broader social, economic and political issues, and together finding ways of challenging the *status quo*.

At the ODW during stage, one of the complaints by the participants was that those at consulates and embassies were unresponsive to their needs and concerns. The ODWs complained of a poor attitude and a reluctance to get too involved in disputes between ODWs and their employers on the part of the embassy officials/OWWA workers. The senator interviewed confirmed this observation/experience stating that the problem is in part related to the attitude of the people working in the diplomatic service. Therefore, it is highly recommended that these workers receive compulsory training (including gender sensitivity training, conflict resolution training, anti-discrimination training), and be made aware of the numerous and diverse problems migrant women, particularly the problems ODWs experience. These training workshops or sessions should include testimonials from actual ODWs, previous ODWs, and other OCWs. Refresher courses on legal issues must also be provided as the laws and policies are constantly changing. Top supervisors in the embassies and OWWA must hold individual workers accountable for any poor advice or recommendations that they give to ODWs, which results in injury or bodily harm to the ODW/OCW. The top supervisors, including high-level officials, ambassadors and senior diplomats also need accountability and sensitisation. Politicians in Congress can help strengthen laws, regulations, and policies that benefit ODWs through better protection of their human rights.

The data clearly indicate that at the ODW during stage in many host countries, particularly the Middle East, the ability to create or join support networks or to get together informally with a group of Filipinos and other nationalities is difficult. For two participants who had worked in Hong Kong informal meetings with other Filipino ODWs were possible at churches. It is in these groups that women can support one another in solidarity, share experiences and acknowledge the "everyday resistances" they have been able to enact. In tandem with the recommendations under formal education at the pre-departure stage above, ODWs who must be given more freedoms to leave the employers' homes, have time off, use the telephone, etc. must then use existing organisations for this purpose, such as community groups and church groups.

Moreover, within the employers' family-households, (prospective) employers and their family-household members must receive through informal and nonformal education, human rights and cross-cultural education that can translate into changes in attitudes, values and interpersonal relationships between employers and ODWs. This is a challenging responsibility of host countries' governments along with NGO participation.

At the post-ODW stage, the data have shown that the attitudes of employers toward migrant returnees are sometimes negative and assumptions (about being wealthy and not really in need of employment) incorrect resulting in returnees being denied or overlooked for jobs they may be fully qualified to do. One possible way to address this problem is to educate employers in the business community and in communities at large through a campaign of sorts which would make them aware of the contributions the "new heroes" have made to the country over the years and the contributions they can make in the Philippine workplace. This campaign could be done through pamphlets, posters, seminars, etc. Additionally, the government could put into place a policy that would address the problems of returning migrants' economic re-integration, similar to an affirmative action policy.

### (c). Non-formal education

The data indicate that most of the participants felt ill-prepared for their overseas jobs, despite many of them having taken the mandatory PDOS. Those who had taken PDOS suggest that it should cover a wider range of topics, it should be longer in duration, it should be offered in various parts of the country (not just in Manila), and it should be offered well in advance of departure. Furthermore, there should be something in place whereby all potential OCWs (even those contemplating going illegally) can receive information and guidance counselling so they can make informed decisions and if they did go illegally they would be better prepared to cope.

It is not only the content of the PDOS that is in need of change, but the way in which it is taught. The teaching methods are predominantly lecture style, with a one-sided involvement (very much teacher-centred). With time constraints to deal with, the seminar instructors often limit their dialogue/question and answer portion of the session to a few minutes or omit it altogether. Participant involvement is then reduced to passive involvement.

As the PDOS is mandated and supposedly supervised by the government administration (the POEA), the content is pretty much dictated by the administration, although initially NGOs did have input into the content. In these seminars, there is little room to critique the migration phenomenon, raise questions about certain vital issues, or address ways of empowering oneself when faced with oppressive circumstances overseas. This tremendous gap must be addressed.

Several NGOs are providing the POEA's mandated PDOS. The funding they receive from the POEA to offer the PDOS helps supplement their budgets. Without this funding some NGOs could probably not offer an intensive PDOS. However, there are NGOs, such as Gabriela, Migrante and Kanlungan, which have been providing their own sort of pre-departure information workshops, independent of the POEA. They refuse to be a partner of POEA in this endeavour and fund the workshops themselves. These workshops are more than an information session – they employ a critical awareness process following the CFP framework. The workshops are based on returning ODWs and potential ODWs coming together to dialogue and reflect on shared perspectives, experiences, strategies for coping, and topics that the participants themselves wish to raise, in addition to learning about the government agencies and benefits that they can access. Furthermore, these workshops are offered in various places in the country (as these organisations have partnering NGOs all over the Philippines) and are not restricted to people who have just been hired to go overseas. (Gabriela offers workshops to those who are returning overseas.) Those contemplating the idea of working as an ODW or OCW are invited to attend. Moreover, workshops for the ODWs' family members are also provided. The needs and concerns of the family left behind are ignored in the POEA's PDOS. These NGOs provide useful examples of non-formal education programs for other organisations to follow. The facilitator of the workshops is usually someone who has been an OCW herself and has undergone gender sensitivity and counselling training.

A recommendation is that the POEA's PDOS teaching methods be made more participatory and reflective and the content be overhauled and updated. The PDOS has to be lengthened to at least two or three days, be provided in other areas of the country, and be offered to those who are still undecided about going overseas as well as those who are soon leaving for ODW/OCW jobs. A form of PDOS should also be provided for family-household members as well since they have a number of concerns that must be addressed. The POEA must invite input from those NGOs, which are providing a more thorough and critical form of pre-departure workshops.

A further recommendation is that the POEA, which has accredited recruitment agencies and NGOs to offer PDOS, regularly monitor these recruitment businesses and organisations to ensure that the PDOS is in fact being provided and that they are following the specifications of the PDOS. Lack of humanpower has been the reason for not doing this. Hence, an allocation of funds must be set aside for this.

At the during stage, as stated above, it is often not possible for ODWs to be involved in any form of group or association when working abroad, except in the case of Hong Kong, and perhaps Singapore and Malaysia. Only one participant was able to participate in a non-formal education course (in cooking) and one other had been given an option by her employer of taking an evening language course, which she declined because she was too tired in the evenings. The opportunity to learn something new in a non-formal educational setting provides a much needed change to daily work schedule, useful skills and knowledge and opportunity to meet other people. A recommendation is that institutions (formal education institutions, church groups, and even the Philippine embassies) provide spaces and volunteers for migrant workers to meet regularly for non-formal learning opportunities, such as language learning, language teaching (for those who are interested in improving their abilities to teach English to employers' children), cooking, accounting, etc.

At the post-ODW stage, the data show that returning ODWs required access to nonformal education programs immediately upon return, which could help them deal with re-integration problems at the personal, family, and societal levels. For the most part these needs were addressed by NGOs, which offer different forms of assistance (from temporary shelter, counselling, legal advice, etc.). However, to ensure that all returning ODWs receive equal opportunity for assistance in reintegrating, a debriefing session should be offered for every returning ODW. The purpose of which would be to help returnees cope by providing opportunities to adopt strategies for countering the effects of "reverse culture shock", easing adaptation and family transition, and managing stress involved in returning to the Philippines. The post-return debriefing would also provide opportunity to reflect on overseas experience, provide feedback and recommendations to OWWA and the POEA, explore lessons learned during overseas work and bring closure to their overseas experience. Furthermore, while OWWA is specifically responsible for assisting OCW returnees re-integrate into the economy, the programs (including non-formal education courses and loan provisions) it provides are few and far between. These programs are under-funded and have been provided for only a small percentage of returnees. Participants declare that non-formal education training in small business planning is one of their biggest demands. Additionally, non-formal education programs that would assist returnees with skills up-grading, job search strategies, etc. is recommended. Indeed a national job-bank should be established that would specialise in finding employment for returnees.

### Suggestions for future research

This study focused on one nationality of ODWs – Filipinos. A study that compares another or other national group(s) may further reveal how ethnicity, culture, and race impact on the ODW experience. Also, differences in their human capital characteristics, such as their ability to use English may also show how their employment experiences are influenced. Furthermore, the norms and values shaping the women's roles in the societies of origin could be further examined and compared to increase our understanding of the part they play in the women's ODW experiences in all three stages (pre-ODW, during ODW and post-ODW experiences).

The data revealed that the women's family-household members were very much affected in a number of ways by their mother/sister/aunt/grandmother's migration. A similar qualitative study to this one that considers in greater detail the attitudes, values and assumptions of other members of the family-household (specifically the husbands, children, elders, and siblings who remain behind) would contribute further to the understanding of the micro dimensions of female migration; how family-household structures, relationships, and roles have been affected by women's migration. Additionally, we would gain a more in-depth understanding of how migration impacts on gender, intergenerational, social and cultural relationships within the family-household. Moreover, the awareness of the family-household members' realities, challenges and struggles would help us understand how class issues affect family-households of similar classes (e.g. lower/middle classes).

This study focused on women ODWs, which allowed me to concentrate on gender, class, race, and ethnicity issues from the women's perspectives. However, a study that focuses on male ODWs (those who work as chauffeurs, gardeners, cooks, "house boys", etc. within the private domain of the employers' homes) would provide a useful comparison that would further reveal how gender dynamics affect ODW experiences and help us understand how class, race, ethnicity and educational issues overlap with gender structures. Another suggested recommendation is to do a study on male OFWs in general. This would include land-based and sea-based male migrant workers. Such a study would reveal the ways in which men are affected by gender, class, race, and ethnicity.

This study had a specific focus on educational experiences. It provided some degree of comparison between the tertiary educated and secondary school educated participants. However, further examination and a comparative analysis between the experiences of Filipino migrant women who have primary school education, high school education and college education would provide a more complete picture of how formal education has, if at all, impacted on their experiences in all three stages. Similarly, although the participants did represent several different occupations, a wider range of participants in occupations including non-traditional feminine jobs and jobs which require post-graduate study may shed light on how formal education impacts on the migrant woman's psycho-cultural (or internal learning) processes, attitudes and perspectives, and their survival/coping strategies at all three stages.

The activities of NGOs were an important part of this study. They played a large role in all three stages (but most especially in the pre-departure and post-ODW stages in the Philippines). The role of NGOs included meeting certain needs and concerns of the migrant women (such as economic needs, need for shelter, informal and non-formal education, counselling, legal help, etc.) that would not be met elsewhere. Although government organisations are responsible for addressing the needs and concerns of migrants, they have not always been effective and many ODWs have not been able to access certain assistance programs at all. An analysis of the historical, philosophical, pedagogical foundations of certain NGOs, which includes an analysis of the dominant philosophy that is embedded in the NGOs' programs, goals and objectives, particularly the assumptions about society, the nature of people, the role of education in society, and the view of the "learner"/migrant worker would broaden our understanding of the roles of NGOs. It would show how NGOs impact on migrant women's experiences and evaluate in greater detail how and if the NGOs contribute to personal and social transformation.

### Final Thoughts

As I began this research my goal was to deepen my understanding of the many issues that surround female labour migration as well as to discover ways of tackling these issues of, for example, racism, classism, sexism, poverty, ethnocentrism, etc. And while the women ODWs, NGO workers, GO officials, congressman and others, as well as the literature helped me understand the complexity of the ODW phenomenon, the complicated overlapping of issues and the need to adjust educational practices accordingly, there is so much more to explore and learn. Therefore, I plan to continue my learning journey through further research on this and related subject matter.

Some of the lessons that stand out for me from this research are: understanding the many ways that education (in all its modes) has directly or indirectly influenced the lives of migrant women; the reaffirmation of the transformative potential of education; and the need for a CFP framework to address the ODW experiences. Yet, I have also come to recognise the fact that there is no one fixed solution or way of doing things in work that has to do with changing consciousness in hope of transforming society. Approaches, systems, and frameworks (including CFP) need constant reformulation if they are to remain adequate for the reality of women's changing lives. There is a need to constantly reflect, create, and recreate alternatives. A final lesson, perhaps the biggest lesson of all, is discovering and understanding the women ODWs' will and ability to struggle, resist, and challenge the *status quo* as individuals and as a collective, despite their oppressive circumstances (and sometimes apparent hopeless situations) in all three stages.

Some of the challenges for me while undertaking this research, besides the obvious ones most people experience when going into a new cultural setting, which is adjusting to culture shock and acclimatising oneself to a new climate (in my case adjusting to a tropical climate from a Canadian winter), was struggling to understand human nature. Perhaps human behaviour is the better way of putting it. These human behaviours ranged from the selflessness, philanthropic and compassion shown by many (i.e. the ODWs, NGO workers, etc) contrasted with the apathy of others, who although aware of the plight of oppressed groups, have no interest in getting involved or attempting to learn more, or making changes (i.e. some government officials in host and sending countries); and the cruelty and exploitative behaviours of, for example, some employers who ill-treat their fellow human beings. Another challenge for me, while appreciating how much has been accomplished, is attempting to come to terms with the fact that there is so much more to be done to ameliorate women's lives and recognising my own limitations in this endeavour.

However, I am hopeful that this study will have implications for future research and for the work of NGOs and GOs. I believe the study also has implications for broader contexts, such as Philippine development, the impact of globalisation, and international migration. I am also optimistic that the study will enable the participants to see how much they have contributed to improving the lives of ODWs and how in their full potential they have contributed and are continuing to contribute to the transformation of society in general.

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## Appendix 1

## INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR MIGRANT WOMEN

### PRE-ODW EXPERIENCES AND INFLUENCES

I. Personal Background

1. Please tell me something about your background.

*Probes:*

-name, age, where born, places you have lived if migrated from where you were born

marital status (how long married), number of children.

-family background (i.e. how many siblings, extended family members you grew up with, parents'/ family's level of education, your family's interest, encouragement and involvement in your schooling, family's occupational status, if you and your family migrated from where you were born - why and where to? Language(s) most commonly used at home.

- experiences recalled as a daughter growing up in family.

- experiences growing up in community/ city.

- important things learned at home and in the community.

### II. Educational and economic background

2. Please tell me something about your educational background.

*Probes:*

-where, kind of school (i.e. private, public, any particular denomination, size of school, number of students, general condition of school and resources).

-describe school experience.

- relevancy of what was learned at school to present life.

- experience with non-formal education (i.e. who offered it, what was the purpose, what was learned? What were reasons for attending NFE activities?)

3. What were your work experiences after formal education?

*Probes:*

-work conditions of each experience (financial and social status, skills, relevance to educational background). Level of satisfaction with work condition. Why?

### III. Recruitment process

4. How did you come to be hired overseas?

*Probes:*

- major factors underlying decision to become ODW (economic, personal, social, cultural).

- other options to going overseas to work as a domestic worker

-how host the country was learned about.

-hired through an agency or through friends' recommendations?

-conditions of recruitment (financial, legal...)

-the role of recruitment agency through which hired (i.e. pre-departure orientation seminars (PDOS). Did family receive any preparation or information about your ODW job?

-some of the reasons you feel you were hired to do your job overseas (i.e. Did your education, experience, qualification, language, etc. help?).

## ODW EXPERIENCE AND INFLUENCES

### IV. Overseas Experience

5. -Tell me about your ODW experience.

*Probes:*

-places worked overseas.

-length of time overseas.

-describe work conditions (i.e. relations between employer, family members and yourself. Treatment by employers, employer's family, wider society, etc.)

-rewards (economically, socially and culturally) experienced in job overseas (Did the job provide fulfillment, identity, creativity?).

-benefits from working overseas. Ways family benefited.

For Women who have children:

-number of children.

-with whom did they stay.

-communication with them.

-length of separation.

-regrets about time away from children.

-encouragement of daughters working overseas when they are old enough.

6. Why do you think more women than men experience more problems when they go to work overseas?

*Probes:*

-similarities of problems shared by women working as domestic workers all over the world.

-why more women than men experience problems when doing contract work (i.e. with their jobs, their safety).

- root causes of the problems women experience.

-why women go abroad to work as domestic workers.

-why Filipinos are the largest group of domestic workers working abroad.

7. What kind of support did you get when you were working abroad?

*Probes:*

-who would you talk to when you had problems or concerns about your job, your circumstances...?

- the role of Philippines national representatives and officers.

-what would have been helpful in job overseas?

-what would have been useful to know before going overseas?

-how days off were spent.

-opportunities to socialize with other women from the Philippines or other domestic workers.

-opportunities useful, beneficial? In what way?

- join an association or group for domestic workers if returned overseas to work as a domestic worker. What would be hoped to be gained from joining this group? What might stop you from joining?
-

V. Education

8. Did you take any formal or non-formal skills courses whilst you were working overseas?

*Probes:*

-courses/programs taken.

-who offered the courses/ educational experiences? (i.e. NGOs, government organisations, educational institutions...)

-feelings about this/these course(s). How were they helpful/useful/empowering?

## POST- ODW EXPERIENCES AND INFLUENCES

VI. Returning to the Philippines

9. What were the major reasons for your decision to return home?

10. How did/does it feel to return home? (Are you returning for a short-term visit or long-term return?)

*Probes:*

-advantages to having worked overseas. In what ways? (i.e. economically, personal development, etc.)

-length of time back in the Philippines.

- problems faced since back in the Philippines.

-how family felt about you returning home and your experiences abroad?

11. Do you feel that you have changed a lot since you have been overseas?

*Probes:*

-ways you feel you have changed (i.e. personal, cultural, social and political) or the ways people have said that you have changed.

## VII. Education

12. In what ways have your educational experiences (NFE, formal and informal) and processes influenced your conditions, purposes and strategies now that you are back in the Philippines?

*Probes:*

-how present and past successes and problems have been influenced by educational experiences and processes.

-ways these educational experiences contributed/resulted in present job/ life circumstances.

-future plans for education. Kind of education helpful at this stage in life/ career (i.e. up-grading).

## VIII. Employment

13. What is your current employment status?

*Probes:*

-if employed, what job, work conditions.

-the advantages of having worked overseas.

-length of time to find employment after returning to the Philippines.

14. What was the role of government agencies (e.g. POEA) and NGOs in your experience in finding employment after returning to the Philippines?

### IX. Proposals for change

15. What are some things that would have helped you as an overseas migrant domestic workers?

*Probes:*

-advice you would give girls and women (thinking about) going to work abroad and those going to work specifically as domestic workers.

- Political Implications: things to be done to ensure female overseas contract workers in general and domestic workers in particular are protected and kept safe and free of abuse.

-how the public (including governments) can be made aware of the special needs of female overseas domestic workers.

-the role of NGOs and governments in improving the quality lives of ODWs.

-ways education programs (NFE, informal and formal) could be changed to improve the ODW experience.

-Will there be a time when no more ODWs will go abroad? Is it possible and why "yes" or "no"?

### X. Future aspirations/plans

16. What do you see for your future?

*Probes:*

-hopes, dreams and plans for the future.

-would you return to work overseas? To which country would you prefer to go to work? Why? (Or why not return to the country where you last worked?)

-barriers perceived to achieving goals.

- aspirations as a little girl. Why did these aspirations change?

-perception of place and future in Philippine society.

## Appendix 2

## INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR NGO DIRECTORS

NGO Background/history

1. Please tell me about your NGO's origin.

*Probes:*

-how organisation originated.

-when it was established.

-how you came to know about it/ get involved.

-how the ODWs get to know about the organisation.

-number of staff.

NGO's goals, visions, objectives

2. Please explain your organisation's goals, visions, objectives.

*Probes:*

-who is involved in this NGO. Whose participation is encouraged?

-primary goals, visions, objectives and values.

-specific objectives and strategies for new or returned ODWs.

Organisation, programs

3. Please elaborate on your organisation's programs.

*Probes:*

-nature and purposes of the programs that are offered by NGO for ODWs.

4. At what stages of the ODWs' experience do you focus on (i.e. pre-departure, during the ODW experience and/or post-ODW experience)?

### Pre-ODW experience

5. How does your organisation assist women at this stage?

*Probes:*

- educational programs offered. When and where (i.e. in Manila)?

-how these attempt to help ODWs.

-how NGO's ability to assist ODWs at this stage could be improved.

### During the ODW experience

6. Do you maintain connections/communication with women who go overseas to work?

*Probes:*

-how contact with women who have become involved with NGO is maintained.

-educational programs offered to the ODWs whilst overseas. When and where are they offered. How these programs attempt to help ODWs.

-how NGO's ability to assist ODWs at this stage could be improved.

7. If serious problems arise for an ODW, what are can you do to help her? What are the organisation's procedures?

### Post-ODW experience

8. Is contact made between the ODW and your organisation after the ODWs return from their overseas work?

9. What educational programs are offered after the women return from overseas? How do these programs help ODWs?

*Probe:*

-how NGO's ability to assist ODWs at this stage could be improved.

### Strategies and outcomes of the organisations

10. How involved is your NGO in the wider community? How is the public kept informed about the NGO's activities?

11. How far reaching is your network? Do you have local, national and international connections and cooperation?

12. Have you collaborated with government agencies in helping to relieve the problems faced by ODWs?

13. What are the outcomes of these connections and programs?

14. What are your strategies for advocating for the ODWs?

15. What is currently being done to assist ODWs by your organisation?

16. What are some of the most successful stories you can share about your organisation's ability to assist ODWs?

17. Do you believe it is necessary to change anything about your organisation to ensure that ODWs are benefiting from your organisation and from their experiences overseas?

## Appendix 3

## INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

### Government Agency 's purpose

1. What is the purpose of your agency?

2. How do you assist ODWs? What are some specific ways you help ODWs?

3. What are the nature and purposes of the programs that are offered by your agency for ODWs?

4. How does your agency assist ODWs at the three stages: pre-ODW experience, during ODW experience and post-ODW experience?

### Pre-ODW Experience

4. What educational programs are offered at this pre-departure stage? How do these attempt to help ODWs?

*Probes:*

-role in the recruitment of ODWs.

-sort of education provided for ODWs, their families and the employers of ODWs.

5. How can you ensure that workers' rights do not take a back seat to the need to meet labour demands from overseas?

### During ODW Experience

6. What is your role in ensuring workers' protection when ODWs are working overseas?

7. Do you offer any sort of educational programs to the ODWs when they are overseas? How do these programs attempt to help ODWs?

8. Do you maintain contact with women who go overseas? How do they and you communicate over time and distance?

9. Do you have any contact with the employers of the ODWs?

10. If serious problems arise for an ODW, what are can you do to help her? What are the agency's procedures?

Post-ODW Experience

11. Does your government agency get in touch with the ODWs after they return from their overseas work? Or do the ODWs get in touch with your agency?

12. What educational programs are offered after the women return from overseas? How do these programs help ODWs with re-entry concerns?

Strategies and outcomes of the agency

13. Do you think your agency is adequate for assisting ODWs?

14. Do you believe it is necessary to change anything about your agency to ensure that ODWs are benefiting from your agency and from their experiences overseas?

15. What are some of the most successful stories you can share about your agency's ability to assist ODWs?

## Appendix 4

## INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR LEGISLATORS IN CONGRESS

1. What do you see as the needs and concerns of ODWs? How are you familiar with these needs and concerns? How are these concerns and needs communicated to you?

*Probes:*

-commitment to OMWs (Overseas Migrant Workers) and ODWs.

-contact with organisations that advocate for OMWs and ODWs.

2. What do you see as the most effective ways of assisting ODWs and meeting their needs? What is currently being done to assist ODWs? What are some examples from the past which demonstrate your ability to deal with ODWs' needs and concerns?

3. How can governments pursue a more active role in the protection of ODWs at the three stages: pre-ODW, during ODW experiences and post-ODW experience?

Pre-ODW experience

5. How can governments assist ODWs and their families before ODWs leave the Philippines?

*Probes:*

- kind of education offered to the ODWs, their families and their employers before leaving for overseas jobs (i.e. by offering pre-departure orientation and skills seminars).

-what can be done to ensure that agencies provide in-depth orientation about foreign employers and their culture (including language training where necessary) be given to ODWs.

-how to ensure training and orientations are gender conscious.

-what can be done to weed out agencies which charge exorbitant fees.

-how accreditation criteria set by government can be enforced.

-how government services can better facilitate workers' placement (POEA, OWWA, etc.).

- orientation for employers about Filipino workers. What kind of orientation should the employers of ODWs receive? How can governments ensure that employers are provided with orientation?

During ODW experience

6. How does the government maintain contact and ensure the welfare of the ODWs whilst they are overseas?

*Probes:*

- how governments can effectively influence laws to ensure ODWs' welfare.

-how enforcement/implementation and effective monitoring of existing policies and regulations can be ensured. (For example, how can ambiguity be avoided in contracts?)

-use of bilateral agreements with receiving countries that would be beneficial for improving the ODWs' work and life conditions.

-forming supportive coalitions with other countries.

-suggestions of alternative arrangements with receiving countries.

-kind of education that can be provided for ODWs whilst they are overseas.

Post-ODW experience

7. How can women be helped with re-entry after ODW experience?

*Probes:*

- kind of assistance provided for the ODW returnees.

- kind of education provided to the returnees.

8. How can efficiency in government bureaucracy be ensured?

9. How can advocacy groups for ODWs best get their concerns and needs known to Governments? *Probe:* How can they and you effectively and regularly communicate?

10. Do you have any vision that the Philippines will no longer have any ODWs? Why or why not?

11. What specific national development policies will be needed to overcome the ODW phenomenon?

## Appendix 5
## Life stories

Below are the life stories of the twelve participants, which include; the participants' family background, education, marital status, where they lived, where they were educated, their jobs before going overseas, where they worked as an ODW, for how long, what they are doing presently and what their plans are for the future.

### MIA

1. Mia is a 23 year old woman originally from a rural area in central Luzon. She is the eldest of six children: She has three brothers and two sisters. Her parents are farmers and are not financially secure. She completed her high school education, despite missing many weeks of school each year in order to help with farm and house work. At age eleven, Mia ran away from home to take a job as a housemaid in a community that is a two-hour's drive by jeepney from her family's home. Mia says it was the only way to get an education – by escaping the demands of her parents who regularly kept her away from school. At a very young age, Mia valued education and enjoyed school. She worked as a housemaid during the day and attended school in the evening. While working as a housemaid, she was able to attend and complete high school. Mia's employers, "were in their 40's and had no children, so they treated me as their own."

At the age of 15, she briefly visited her family again after a four year absence and then went to Manila to look for a job. She lived with her former employer's nephew's family working as a temporary housemaid. She found a job as a cashier in a disco pub, but was fired because she couldn't stay awake during her late shift. She took another job as a housemaid and lived at a boarding house. She was recruited by this employer to go abroad to Japan, as an entertainer and began lessons in dancing. Before she completed the lessons, her teacher suggested she go as a domestic worker to Singapore. Mia agreed because, "the practice time [to finish dancing lessons] was six months before I could go [to Japan] and the offer for Singapore was only two weeks before I could go."

Mia was in Singapore between 1993 and 1995. Mia and the five other young girls (aged 15 to 16) were recruited as domestic workers. Mia, at age 17, was the eldest in the group. From the moment they arrived at the Singapore airport things went from bad to worse. The girls discovered upon arrival that they had been sold into prostitution.

Mia experienced physical and mental abuse, forced confinement, starvation, an escape, working illegally for room and board only, an extended prison sentence for being caught without the proper documentation and an expired visa, and two suicide attempts. She was finally returned to the Philippines after a year and a half.

She became a key witness in an internationally known murder trial of another domestic worker with whom she was imprisoned/hospitalised for mental breakdown. The domestic worker had explained to Mia her story and gave details about the murder. She confessed her innocence to Mia. For the purpose of testifying Mia was flown by the Philippine government back to Singapore. But before she had a chance to testify, the domestic worker was executed.

After returning to the Philippines, Mia worked as a salesperson in a boutique where she met her husband. Soon after Mia had her child, she and her husband separated.

Mia is a single mother of a three year old son. She is now a full time worker with an NGO in Manila, where she assists other ODWs among others, through nonformal and informal education. She hopes to continue this job in the future.

### 2. DELIA

Delia is 37 years old. She was born and raised in Abra, North Luzon. She has five brothers and seven sisters. She is the third from the youngest. Her father has a college education and before he retired, he worked as a labourer with the department of highways. Her mother had elementary school education and is a homemaker. Her parents owned a small farm. She enjoyed being with the cattle and only worked at small farm chores when she felt like it. During her childhood Delia lived with her grandmother for

one year. She attended a private catholic elementary school. In high school, she studied at a public agricultural school. After high school she took a four year course at an agricultural college.

After graduating, she worked for the Bureau of Forestry as a forest ranger. She quit after a month because she couldn't climb the mountain everyday. She then worked for a year and a half in the resource office in the capital of the province, Angeles City. She quit the job when she was recruited by a friend to go to Kuwait as a domestic worker. She left for Kuwait in 1986 and stayed until 1990. She returned to the Philippines once during this period, but renewed her contract and went back to the same employer. She stayed until the Gulf War in 1990. During the beginning of the war, she stayed with other Filipinos in refugee camps in Jordan and Iraq run by the United Nations. She returned to the Philippines in October, 1990.

In 1991, Delia went to Saudi Arabia as a domestic worker for six years but due to a skin disorder, "a disease like a rash" which she in began to develop in November 1996 she had to leave Saudi Arabia and return to the Philippines in 1997.

Presently, she is living with her sister in Manila. They have a small sari-sari store, which Delia works in. Delia is single and has no children. She is hoping to go overseas again as a domestic worker to Europe, Canada or Australia.

3. VAL

Val is 32 years old. She is from the Illongo tribe in South Catabato in Mindanao. She is from a family of twelve. She has six sisters and three brothers. She is the sixth child of ten. Her mother is a farmer and homemaker. Her father who was a farmer died in the early 1990's. Val is single and has no children. She supports many of her siblings, their families and her mother.

Val completed high school at a "prestigous catholic missionary-run private school". She has always enjoyed school and had plenty of friends at school.

She went on to do a Bachelor of Science at a college in South Catabato. She got a job at a school for boys as soon as she graduated. She then taught nursery and kindergarten at a Protestant learning centre, but she had to resign because of a larynx problem. She then worked as a manager for a private company. But due to her parents' fears of her getting kidnapped, because at that time kidnapping was a common occurrence and Val was responsible for large sums of money, she resigned. She worked at two other jobs on six-month contracts with Philippine Foods and Dole Philippines. She then took time off to care for her dying father.

After her father died and between 1992 and 1995, Val worked at many temporary jobs as a domestic worker and laundress in Manila.

In 1995, she went to Saudi Arabia as a domestic worker. She stayed two years. She returned to the shelter for migrant workers in Manila where she stayed for three months and then she visited her family in Mindanao. In October, 1997, Val went to Taiwan as a domestic worker. She left the job, New Year's eve and returned to the shelter in Manila. She has been looking for another domestic work job in Hong Kong, where she hopes to work for a foreigner because, "I think the foreigner is more broad-minded than the Chinese. [And] I want an employer who is Christian." She has not yet found one. In the meantime she has very little money and is "living by faith". She explains, "God has given me many blessings…He will help with your food. I thank the Lord… Actually, my friends, there are three. We look after each other. Two are in South Korea and one is in Taiwan… I support them, our food." She works as a secretary for Avon, which pays 3000 pesos a month.

### 4. CHER

Cher is 30 years old. She was born and raised in the village in Northern Luzon, where she now lives. Her father, who is now dead, was a farmer and her mother is a homemaker. Cher is the second from the youngest of four children – the only daughter. She graduated from public high school in the village.

She is married and now has three children, aged four years, six years and one month old. Her husband is a tricycle driver and she is a homemaker but is looking for paid employment.

She did not enjoy school and did not want to finish but her mother insisted.

In 1996, Cher went to Malaysia to work as a domestic worker. No one checked her passport when she left the Philippines: "I went out the backdoor". Her employers were "very cruel". After four months, she escaped from the house and attempted to walk to the Philippine embassy. However, on her way, she was picked up by the police and put in jail. Her employers would not bail her out, so she stayed in prison for one month. After a month, the employers returned her passport and the police took Cher to the airport. She was told not to ask any questions. When she arrived in the Philippines, no one commented on her passport, but later she discovered it had been stamped, "Drug Trafficker with punishment of the death penalty." When she returned she stayed with relatives in Antipolo. After ten days her husband came and took her back to their village. When she returned she was already pregnant. She explains, "The people here gossip that I had a boyfriend and they do not accept this baby as my husband's… It is difficult to live here."

A local NGO is helping to take the issue of her passport to the courts. She explains, "The lawyers are all volunteers... I am waiting for a notice of hearing in San Fernando… [Until this is cleared up] I will never be allowed out of the Philippines unless I change my name."

### 5. DAWN

Dawn is 38 years old. She is from a small village in Northern Luzon. She is the eldest of nine children. Soon after her birth, Dawn's parents gave her to her aunt. Her auntie, who was single until later in life (she married at age 42) raised Dawn and six of her siblings.

Dawn completed her schooling in the local private high school. She went on to complete a midwife course at a college in a nearby city. Her auntie paid all her education expenses. She practised as a midwife in a private clinic until she got married. She had three children. When she was pregnant with her third child she and her husband separated. As a single mother of a five year old, a three year old and a two year old, and still living with her auntie and some of her siblings, she was recruited to go to Brunei as a domestic worker.

From 1986 to 1991, Dawn worked for one employer in Brunei. For two years she was not allowed out of the house (unless she was accompanied by her employers) and never had a day off. Although she applied to go to Canada, and was accepted, her employer refused to allow her to go. In her fifth year, Dawn was exhausted and sick. She completed her contract and returned to the Philippines.

She and her partner (common law husband) migrated to Manila where her partner worked for a year as a driver for a company. Dawn's children stayed in the village with their great aunt. While in Manila, Dawn took a computer course for a month but could not afford to complete it. For eight months they lived with her partner's parents in a northern village where her partner had temporary employment. Dawn is a full time housewife. Her partner is working as a driver and gives Dawn a small housekeeping allowance. She is expecting a baby in a few months. Dawn and her family are living with her auntie.

Dawn would consider going overseas again, but she is unable to go anywhere until after the baby is born and even then she would have no one to help care for her children as her auntie is getting too old to raise another young child.

### 6. BELLA

Bella was born in Abra, North Luzon. She has two sisters and three brothers. She is the second to the eldest. Her mother is a housewife and her father worked in the military. Bella is married and has three children. The children are 15 (daughter), 14, and 12 years old (both sons). Her husband is a taxi driver and Bella is a midwife by training.

She speaks English, Illocano, Tagalog and Ipneg (from the mountain province).
Moved to La Union April 1997. "I moved here because my family is from here. My mother is from here. Our taxi is in Baguio. So we came here because Baguio is very near."

She attended the Pugo Private Catholic School, but as her father was a military man, the family moved around a lot: "Therefore I went to different schools. [We went to] Pampango where I did grade one, then to Pugo for grade two and then to Seha for grade three and then to Abra for grade four and then back to here [Pugo] for grade five and six. I finished high school in Abra and then went to San Fernando College and studied Midwifery for two years… My parents paid the tuition." Education was highly valued in Bella's family. All of her brothers and sisters finished college.

Her first job was at the hospital in Agra where she worked as a midwife for two years. She then transferred to Parents Plan International (an NGO) where she worked as a midwife for three years. When she got married she resigned and stayed home from 1980 to 1983. She was bored as a "plain housewife" and took a job as a clerk for the municipal government, but because the salary was very low she stayed only one year and resigned. When Parents Plan International offered income generating project like swine raising she took care of pigs for income. From 1989 to 1993 she worked as a government nursing aid. In the meantime, her husband was a driver for Parents Plan International, but he resigned and took a loan of 14,000 pesos a month to buy a taxi. "As of yet we do not have an income from it. We are paying the bank each month. The money we receive just pays to keep the taxi running." In 1993, she resigned and applied to go to Hong Kong as a Domestic Helper. She stayed two years. She worked very hard: "I did the cooking, the washing, cleaning, dishes, laundry and assisted the two children with their school work." She had one day off a week. She slept in a cabinet (like an entertainment unit with doors), "with only enough room for me. I could not turn over inside it." She left Hong Kong because her employer, who was "very strict" would argue with Bella, not allow her to use the telephone but mainly she left because of a lack of food: "…there was not enough food for my daily subsistence."

She converted to a "Born again Christian" in Hong Kong, which has had the most profane influence on her life-style and personality.

Presently, she is an organiser for an NGO (Kanlungan) which supports and advocates for migrant women domestic workers and she is establishing a new NGO for ODWs, which will do similar work as Kanlungan as well as provide income generating projects.

### 7. TESSY

Tessy is a 28 year old woman. She was born and raised in the village in Northern Luzon where she is currently living. She is from a family of six. She has one brother and two sisters. Her parents are farmers. Her mother and father are elderly now and raise a pig and grow rice.

Tessy has completed her high school education in the village and attended a college in the nearest large city where she completed her Bachelors of education. She has since completed 30 units of the Master of Arts program at another college in a nearby town. She must write her thesis in order to graduate, but she explains why she cannot complete this degree: "For thesis writing you have to spend a lot of money… I have no money…" Tessy is married and has two children – her son is six years old and her daughter is four months old.

Her husband works as a tricycle driver, but he does not own the tricycle. Tessy and her husband are renting a *nipa* hut because they cannot afford a house and her husband refuses to share a house with her parents.

She explains the interdependent relationship she has with her parents: "My mother and father help me. When I go [to teach] at school they look after the children. If they do not take care of my baby I won't be able to earn money – have a job. And if I have no money, I cannot give them [money] also. They can help me and I can help them also."

Tessy has been teaching as a substitute teacher at the local primary school. She has never had a permanent teaching position.

Tessy took a job as a domestic worker in Singapore. She stayed there for a year and a half, between 1993 and 1995. Her first employers did not let her leave the house and never complied with the requirement that gave her one day off. She changed employers but the new employer never gave Tessy her salary on time and Tessy had to ask for it at the end of each month. For this reasons she returned to the Philippines.

Tessy does substitute teaching whenever possible in her community and in other villages nearby. She is involved with an NGO in the nearby city and she is a founding member of a new NGO – a local affiliate of the parent NGO – which is in the process of officially establishing itself.

In the near future, she would like to go to Taiwan or Korea as factory worker or ODW. She would also like to be able to finish her Master thesis, but feels this is impossible because of financial reasons and lack of time.

### 8. TONETTE

Tonnette is 48 years old. She was born and raised in the village, Agoo, where she now lives. She has four brothers and one sister. Tonnette is the second eldest child. Her parents who are now both dead both had grade six education. Her father was a government employee and her mother was a homemaker. Tonnette completed high school in the nearby private Catholic high school.

When she graduated from high school, she took a job as a Barangay official which paid 600 pesos a month (approximately CDN$24).

She got married and now has five children: Two of her children are in college and three are in high school.

In 1995, Tonnette went to Kuwait as a domestic worker. She had five different employers within two years. She changed employers because of verbal and physical abuse from the "Sir" and from the children; and she was not paid her full salary and was not allowed to use the telephone or send letters in the mail. At one point she worked three months for an old woman. She left that job because she did not like working for old women in general and the woman never gave her time off, nor could she speak English and at that time, Tonnette's Arabic was still not very fluent. Another employer laid her off, because they felt they did not need a maid anymore. She stayed at her final job long enough to earn enough money for the airfare home She returned to the Philippines because she was homesick. She came home with 6000 pesos (approximately CDN$240).

She used that money to open a sari-sari store. She says that the money she makes from the sari-sari store is only enough for daily living – it does not cover her children's school fees. Her husband is making a modest salary as a government employee.

Her last employer has asked her to return to Kuwait. Even though the salary is very low, she is getting ready to go next month in order to earn money to put all of her children through college.

9. TERI

Teri is 26 years old. She has four brothers. Her mother's occupation is a housekeeper. Her father, who is now dead, was a government employee.

Teri finished her high school education at the local public school and went on scholarship to a private college in a nearby city (San Fernando) where she took agriculture. After college she also did a two year secretarial course, while working part-time in a government company. Teri was a star athlete and went to many national track and field events. After college she worked one year in Manila as a factory worker. Then she went to San Fernando and worked two years in an insurance agency as a supervisor. She met her husband in 1989 and after three years of marriage they had a baby boy. Teri's husband's salary as a heavy equipment driver was very low, so when the boy was two years old (in 1994) Teri went to Singapore to work as a domestic worker. She was recruited by an agency of the POEA. However, when she arrived in Singapore, her contract was substituted with another one, which paid her less salary. In fact for the first ten months she received no salary. She was told that her salary was to pay off the airfare, which the agency had stated had already been paid for. She stayed at her employer's sister's house, but was expected to be the maid for three houses – her actual employer's house and the employer's two sisters' houses. After six months, of maltreatment, lack of food and sleep, her true employer took her back to live in her house, but she was never paid and never had a day off. On weekends she was taken to the sisters' houses to work as their maid. At New Year's her employer gave her a "gift" of money.

Teri applied to Canada and was accepted, but her employer got angry and refused to allow her to go. A month after that, when her two year contract was up, Teri returned to the Philippines.

She quickly got a direct hire and returned to Singapore. At this second job, she was physically and verbally abused. In the first three months she had no day off and she received no salary. In the fourth month she was given four hours off a week. She was accused her of theft by her employers and was taken to the police station along with the two other housemaids. Although they were not charged because of a lack of evidence, the employer refused to let them eat for 24 hours and treated them even worse than before. Her employer only allowed the maids to eat the food that was left over, after the employer and family had eaten. Eventually, Teri escaped to the Philippines Embassy. The employer paid one month's salary and returned her passport so that Teri could go back to the Philippines.

When she returned home empty handed, she found that her husband had taken another woman as his "wife" who was living with her husband, her son and mother-in-law. She and her husband separated and she is now a single mother who receives no child support from her husband. She lives in a rented *nipa* hut with her son who is now six years. She is a faith healer and often does this job for free. When she does get paid a donation, she gives it to others or buys candles.

She hopes to go back overseas. "My first employer asked me to go back. I want to go but I got no savings, no money, no earnings. Without money it is difficult." She says she would like to go to Taiwan or Hong Kong or stay in her village and open a business like a 'buy and sell' sari-sari store and take care of her son.

### 10. TA TA

TaTa is 48 years old. She is the eldest of eight children: She has four sisters and three brothers. Her father was a trader. "He used to go to other countries. But frankly speaking, he was a gambler, you know, playing mah-jongg and poker, and all those games…[He was] irresponsible. We [children] sold coconuts in the market and vegetables to make money."

TaTa was the only one of her family who was educated in a private school. She says, "I was lucky to be educated in a private school but I am unlucky because I got married at an early age of seventeen." She had a son after one year of marriage but the baby died. Two years later she had a baby girl and after that three more children. Nine years later, she and her husband separated. She then began to work as a government employee at the post office. She explains that she got that job because she used to do laundry for the director. At that same time she attended college for two years, but she quit college because her children were getting older and their needs increased, such as school fees and school uniforms.

Over a period of 12 years, TaTa worked illegally overseas in three Asian countries. In each case, she was recruited by illegal (not registered with the POEA) "recruiters". For her first job, in 1986, she went to Hong Kong to work as a domestic worker, but she found she had to work three part-time jobs in order to cover her living expenses and after six months returned home with an empty pocket and an exhausted body. For her second job she was again recruited to do clerical worker by "friends", who gave her a fake visa to go to Kuwait. When she arrived she found her job to be as a domestic helper. She worked for a Kuwaiti family for four months before the country was invaded by Iraq. She received no pay. She explains that her first three month's salary was to pay off the recruiter and employer's expenses for bringing her to Kuwait and her last month's salary was not paid her because the banks had closed and the employer, who was fleeing to Saudi Arabia, needed all the money he had with him. After living a few months in temporary crowded hot camps in Kuwait and then Jordan, the Philippine government sent her back to the Philippines by a specially chartered aeroplane. Upon arrival in Manila, she had to borrow money to get back to her home in the South. She was deeper in debt than she was when she left.

For her third job, she travelled by boat for a week in the cover of darkness into Malaysia, only to be told by the recruiter when they arrived that she and the other 35 women on board were brought there to work as prostitutes. She refused and after two months she found employment as a domestic helper. However, her salary was too low to save or send money home and the work was very hard. After three months, she and a friend took a fishing boat filled beyond capacity with other illegal migrants back to the Philippines. She says, "I was lucky. The sea was calm and there were no bandits." This time she arrived at home with 2500 pesos in her pocket (approximately $100 Canadian) to pay toward her debts.

She now wants to put her children through college (and perhaps go back to College herself) and/or open her own bakery for which she needs capital. Therefore, she has decided to go to work illegally in Brunei.

She states that finding overseas work legally is difficult for her because she does not have a college degree, nor does she have the money to pay for the processing fees. She adds that legal recruiters would not hire her now because she is too old.

## 11. MARCIE

Marcie was born and raised in Manila. She is 42 years old. She comes from a family of seven. Her father is a retired painting contractor and her mother is a retired teacher and homemaker. She was encouraged in her schooling by her father, in particular.

She completed high school and took a secretarial course at the Polytechnique University of Philippines. She was self-supporting student – working as a civil servant and as a clerical worker. She also worked as a secretary to a sales manager in a private firm. She began a course in accounting but before she finished she eloped with her husband.

She and her husband have four children: three sons (including 18 year old twins and a 21 year old son) and a 17 year old daughter. Over the years, she took nonformal education courses in dressmaking, handicraft, baking and aerobics. These courses were free because the teacher was her friend. Marcie herself taught aerobics for four years for a small salary.

Marcie worked in Saudi Arabia as a domestic worker between 1993 and 1995. She was overworked and was not allowed to rest very often, but when she got used to Arabic food, she was permitted to eat as much as she liked. She returned to the Philippines because her husband requested her to return home.

Since returning, Marcie has worked in the canteen, which she and her husband own. They are in debt from borrowing money from friends and relatives to build the canteen and to put her eldest son through an expensive private college. She would like to expand this business into a larger one and perhaps branch out into other areas.

## 12. ROE

Roe is from Isabela province. She is 27 years old. She is the eldest of four brothers and a sister. Her father is a farmer and mother is a homemaker. She graduated from a public high school and had planned to go to College to take education but her mother said there was no money so she attended a public vocational school in Manila, which was inexpensive. She lived with her auntie for the six months it took her to complete her diploma. She then worked for four months at a factory sewing shoulder bags, but it is difficult to stay at this job. "I go early in the morning, take the bus because I live far from the work place. I work eight hours but with overtime more [time]."

During the six months waiting period for her visa to Singapore to be processed she was unemployed. She paid the processing fees through with salary reduction.

She is now married and has no children.

She speaks English, Tagalog, a little Chinese, German, and Malay.

She was hired through an agency and went to Singapore as a domestic worker from 1992 to1997. Her first employers, a Chinese family for whom she worked for two years, were "very bad". "I was afraid of them. I was afraid. They treat me like a dog… they shout. And I had not much food. I [had]… no privacy. I was not allowed to watch TV or use the telephone." She left this job after her two year contract was finished because she was underpaid and overworked and found another job with a German family. "They are good employers. That is why I stay so long…. I had my own room, my own TV, my freedom. I have Sunday off and I go to church. And I have holidays too. I have lots of friends. I even have my own telephone in my bedroom so I talk to my friends."

She is now preparing to go to Hong Kong as a domestic worker this month. She has signed a two year contract and will pay her fees through salary reduction. "I will go again to help my husband, so I can build a family." Although she was not able to save money from her two jobs in Singapore, she hopes to save money during her job in Hong Kong. "I want to have our own business in Isabela, like a grocery store."

If she had the time and money she would like to go back to college and become a pastor, but her immediate future plan is to "go back to the Philippines after my two years in Hong Kong and have a baby and spend time with my husband and family."

Table 1.

| Participants | Age | Marital status | Number of Children | Number of siblings | Placement in family |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Mia | 23 | separated (3 yrs) | one | five | eldest |
| Delia | 37 | single | none | thirteen | tenth |
| Val | 32 | single | none | ten | sixth |
| Cher | 30 | married | three | four | second |
| Dawn | 38 | separated (15yrs) | four | nine | eldest |
| Bella | 40 | married | three | six | second |
| Tessy | 28 | married | two | four | second |
| Tonette | 48 | married | five | five | second |
| Teri | 26 | separated (1 yr) | one | four | eldest |
| Ta Ta | 48 | separated (20yrs) | four | five | eldest |
| Marcie | 42 | married | four | four | second |
| Roe | 27 | married | none | six | eldest |

Table 2.

| Participants | Highest level of Formal education | Employment before going overseas as ODW |
|---|---|---|
| Mia | High school | Housemaid |
| Delia | College [agriculture] | Unemployed (quit job as forest ranger). |
| Val | College [education] | Unemployed (was previously caring for her dying father and helping at home) |
| Cher | High school | Unemployed/ Homemaker |
| Dawn | College [midwifery] | Homemaker (single mother) |
| Bella | College [midwifery] | Unemployed/ Homemaker (quit job as a nursing aide) |
| Tessy | College [education] | Student/ Homemaker |
| Tonette | High school | Homemaker |
| Teri | College [secretarial] | Homemaker |
| Ta Ta | 2 years College [commerce] | Postal worker/ Homemaker (single mother) |
| Marcie | College [secretarial] | Homemaker and taught aerobics part-time |
| Roe | Technical training [sewing] | Unemployed (quit job as a sewing machine operator at a factory) |

Table 3.

| Participants | Languages spoken | Home province | From rural or urban area |
|---|---|---|---|
| Mia | Filipino, Tagalog, English | Neuva VI | rural |
| Delia | Filipino, Ilocano, English, Arabic | North Luzon | rural |
| Val | Filipino, Ilonga, English | Mindanao | rural |
| Cher | Filipino, Ilocano, English | North Luzon | rural |
| Dawn | Filipino, Ilocano, English | North Luzon | rural |
| Bella | Filipino, Ilocano, English, Ipneg | North Luzon | rural/urban |
| Tessy | Filipino, Ilocano, English | North Luzon | rural |
| Tonette | Filipino, Ilocano, English, Arabic | North Luzon | rural |
| Teri | Filipino, Ilocano, English | North Luzon | rural |
| Ta Ta | Filipino, Visayan, Ilango, English | Mindanao | urban |
| Marcie | Filipino, Tagalog, English, Arabic | Manila | urban |
| Roe | Filipino, English, Chinese, German, Malay | Isabella | rural |

Table 4.

| Participants | Recruited by: | Legal / illegal recruitment | Country/ies worked | Years overseas |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Mia | individual | illegal | Singapore | 2 (1993-95) |
| Delia | agency | legal | Kuwait, Saudi Arabia | 11 (1986-97) |
| Val | agency | legal | Saudi Arabia, Taiwan | 2 (1995-97) |
| Cher | individual | legal | Malaysia | 1 (1996) |
| Dawn | agency | legal | Brunei | 5 (1986-91) |
| Bella | agency | legal | Hong Kong | 2 (1993-95) |
| Tessy | agency | legal | Singapore | 2 (1993-95) |
| Tonette | agency | legal | Kuwait | 2 (1995-97) |
| Teri | agency | legal | Singapore | 2 (1994-96) |
| Ta Ta | individual | illegal | Hong Kong, Kuwait, Malaysia | 5 (1986-91) |
| Marcie | agency | legal | Saudi Arabia | 2 (1992-94) |
| Roe | agency | legal | Singapore | 5 (1992-97) |

Table 5.

| Participants | Treated well by employer? | Kinds of maltreatment experienced | Other problems |
|---|---|---|---|
| Mia | no | forced prostitution, unlawful confinement, non- payment of salary when working illegally after escaping, no legal representation, imprisonment. | depression in prison, attempted suicide, tried unsuccessfully to save a fellow inmate from execution, who was accused of murder. |
| Delia | yes | n/a | Gulf War (forced evacuation), health problems, salary reduction to pay back agency but employer had already paid the agency. |
| Val | no | non- payment of salary, accused of stealing, overworked, no bedroom provided. | language problem, could only eat when employers were finished eating, could not attend church, could not read bible. |
| Cher | no | physical abuse, imprisonment, non-payment of salary, no days off. | passport was tampered with by government officials and as a result now forbidden to leave the Philippines. |
| Dawn | no | not allowed to use telephone, no days off, overworked, no bedroom provided, salary reduction. | sickness from overworking and lack of sleep. |
| Bella | no | not allowed to use telephone, lack of food. | Language problem. |
| Tessy | no | overworked, no bed or bedroom provided, not allowed to use telephone, no days off, unlawful confinement, verbal abuse, late | Language problem. |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | payment of salary every month. | |
| Tonette | no | no days off, physical abuse, salary reduction although agency already paid by employer, contract substitution, not allowed to use telephone or write letters, children were disrespectful. | homesickness |
| Teri | no | overworked, no days off, verbal abuse, lack of food, no bedroom provided, non- payment of salary, accused of stealing, contract substitution, physical abuse, death threats by employer, not allowed to use telephone or write letters. | could only eat when employers were finished eating, sickness from lack of food, all personal documents and possessions taken by employer, boredom and uncertainty of future at Embassy Centre, homesickness. |
| Ta Ta | no | forced prostitution, contract substitution, non- payment and underpayment of salary | Gulf War evacuation, dangers in travelling because entering countries illegally. |
| Marcie | no | no bed or bedroom provided, no days off, sexual assault, overworked, lack of sleep, low salary, late payment of salary, accused of having a boyfriend (a serious accusation in Saudi Arabia- punishable by law). | could not attend church, could not read bible, forbidden by employer to pray. |
| Roe | no | no privacy (employers entered bedroom at all times), verbal abuse, lack of food, overworked, not allowed to use telephone or TV or keep lights on in room to read bible or write. | |

Table 6.

| Participants | present occupation | future plans |
|---|---|---|
| Mia | works at an NGO | continue with NGO work. |
| Delia | works in sister's sari-sari store | would like to go to Canada, Europe or Australia as ODW. |
| Val | unemployed | would go to Hong Kong or possibly to Saudi Arabia again as ODW, get a job in the Philippines as office clerk or become a mail-order bride to an American. Would like to pursue dental assistant courses but has no money to pay for the course. |
| Cher | homemaker | would like to go overseas again as ODW, but cannot until passport problem is corrected. Would like to take a computer course, but cannot afford tuition fee. |
| Dawn | homemaker | would like to go to Canada as ODW, but not possible because baby will soon be born and auntie is now too old to look after children. |
| Bella | working at an NGO, establishing a new NGO, homemaker. | would like to go to Canada or Israel as ODW, or continue with NGO work. |
| Tessy | substitute teacher | would go to Taiwan or Korea as factory worker or ODW. |
| Tonette | operates own sari-sari store. | going back to Kuwait as ODW to previous employer. (Going to Manila to process visa application this week.) |
| Teri | faith healer, homemaker | would go to Taiwan or Hong Kong as ODW but has no money to pay processing fees. Would like to take computer or become a teacher, but says this is impossible. |
| Ta Ta | homemaker, sewer | going to Brunei (illegally) to work in hotel soon, but would also like to go to Israel (illegally) as ODW, because "only Israel does not discriminate against old people [those over 40 years]". Possibly marry a foreigner but stay in the Philippines. |
| Marcie | runs own restaurant | would like to expand restaurant "a franchise, like *JollyBee*." |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Roe | unemployed | going to Hong Kong as ODW in a few weeks. (Is in Manila now processing her visa application.) |